

ORANGE COUNTY CALENDAR

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In slower times, the world looked blurry only to people who needed glasses. Now things have sped up to the point that lots of things metamorphose into streaks of light or indistinct blobs—glimpsed as we zoom down the freeway, scroll down a computer screen, or press the fast-forward button on the VCR.

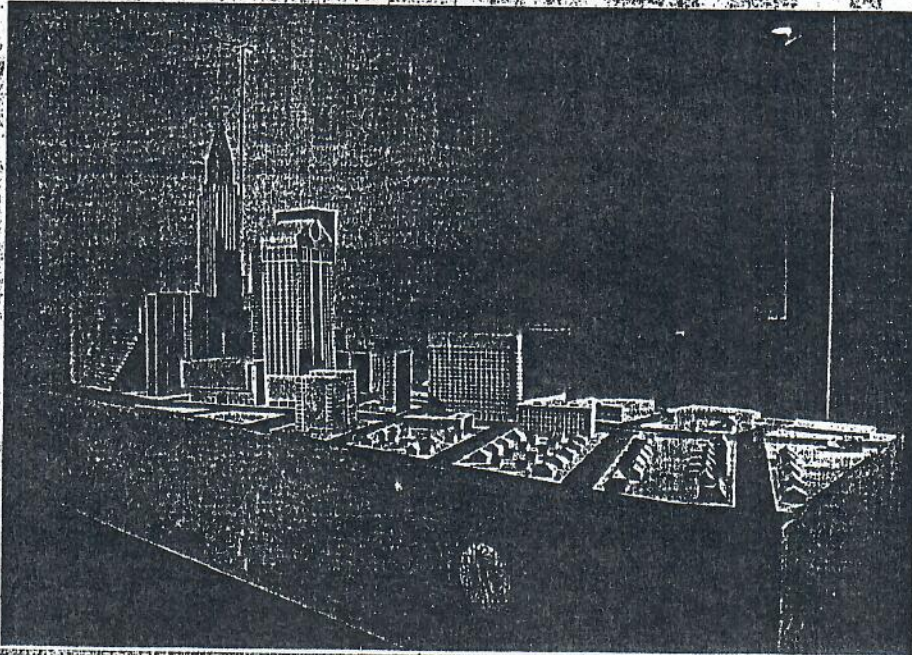
Clubs routinely zap their dancing patrons with rapid-fire sequences of weird video images as a "neutral" background for the music. Moments of cataclysmic events are broadcast so repeatedly that their significance and emotional resonance erode.

UC Irvine Art Gallery director Brad Spence selected the seven Los Angeles artists in "Other Related Areas"—an engagingly visual show, despite its academic-sounding title—because their work has to do with the way contemporary technology has altered our awareness of the world.

Habib Kheradgar sets the tone in the first room of the gallery by covering the walls with layered green cloths to create a lush moiré effect. The wavy pattern plays tricks on the eyes, forcing them to roam across space in an unfocused way, without a clear sense of separation between what's "out there" and what's happening inside your head.

Curved wire forms placed against widely spaced horizontal lengths of wire deftly suggest the title image ("Budding Arches in a Green Field"). Kheradgar's conceit is to re-imagine a sunlit landscape as a shimmering, indistinct world hovering somewhere between vision and imagination.

Soo Kim's "Speed" photographs, taken from the window of a moving car, also have an intrinsic sensory appeal. The best ones are almost abstract: blurs of greens and blues, grays and whites—maybe with a splotch of red—that you



Charles Gaines' "Airplane Crash Clock" combines the meticulous and shoddy to comment on disaster as spectator sport.

When Seeing Isn't Believing

ART REVIEW

can only imagine to be trees or cars or a neon sign. More easily readable images—trees blowing in the wind, a beach view—lack that fluid sense of uncertainty.

Charles Gaines focuses on temporal dislocations in "Airplane Crash Clock," a kinetic piece with sound effects. On top of a table with a built-in clock, immaculate wooden architectural models of the Empire State Building, the AT&T Building and other recognizable (though geographically disordered) Manhattan real estate are laid out next to a sprawling miniature subdivision and an industrial area.

A model airplane mounted on a pole slowly rises from within the table. The cheering of an unseen crowd is the cue for the plane to take a slow nose dive into the model and disappear into a trap door that flips over to reveal the "blood"-smeared, mangled body of the crashed plane. After a slight pause, the trap door revolves again, restoring the pre-crash plane—which slowly rises again, ready for

its next doomed flight.

Gaines packs a lot into this little performance, from the spectator-sport aspect of disasters to the repetitious quality of media reporting on them. Even the contrast between the bland but labor-intensive architectural models of corporate centers and the shoddy toy plane with its clumsily painted simulation of trauma suggests a troubling dislocation of cultural values.

Contemporary life also is fragmented—not necessarily in a negative way—by the sheer numbers of images that shape our notion of the world.

In a suite of delicately subtle untitled drawings clustered at the bottom edges of twin sheets of paper, Adam Ross establishes the outlines of an imaginary kingdom of the future based on an inimitable blend of Surrealist imagery, sci-fi dime novel cover art, odd-looking but banal objects (windsocks) and urban design elements (gridded streets, markers indicating the height of future construction).

Although Ross came to prominence as a glorious colorist, he also is an exquisite draftsman. The drawings might be meditations about the collision of practicality and fantasy in utopian images and the way even the most farfetched works of imagination recombine preexisting design elements.

Other works in the show are evocations of off-kilter landscapes (Isabell Helmerdinger's digitally manipulated advertising photographs, Karin Johansson's little room papered with huge, pink-tinted photographs of a field) and kaleidoscopic views of the raffish sameness of motel room fixtures (Charles LaBelle's photo collages).

A strong emphasis on the visceral and experiential gives "Other Related Areas" a bright sense of adventure—which seems only right, since there's no going back.

"Other Related Areas," UC Irvine Art Gallery, School of the Arts (off Bridge Road). Hours: Noon-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Free. Through Nov. 7. (949) 824-6610.