

UCSD's Mandeville Gallery presents two artists' installations "Spatial Encounters" on May 24

May 9, 1990

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UCSD MANDEVILLE GALLERY TO PRESENT TWO ARTISTS' INSTALLATIONS -- "SPATIAL ENCOUNTERS" -- OPENING MAY 24

Two diverse installations by artists Craig Stecyk and Fred Thieme will be shown in a single exhibition at the University of California, San Diego's Mandeville Gallery from May 25 through June 24.

An opening reception will take place for the artists at the gallery from 6-8 p.m. Thursday, May 24. The public is invited.

Stecyk's installation uses mostly found artifacts gathered over several months from the border area between the cities of San Diego and Tijuana. Titled "Frontera," the central element of the work will be a small hut, roofed with tire tread tiles, and shingled with discarded license plates.

Not only a visual work, the installation will engage the viewer's senses of touch and sound. Noises which are heard around the border were taped and will be played during the installation. The ambient sound includes air chatter between a U.S. Border Patrol helicopter and the command station; musicians in a Tijuana bar, and a squabble which resulted in unexpected gunfire.

The hut will be made from recycled wood and other materials--some found in and near the Tijuana River. Inside the hut, Stecyk will have placed items which might have been left behind by migrants, along with religious icons and discarded shoes (he says the river is full of shoes which become heavy with water and fall off while the wearer is trying to escape INS personnel).

Stecyk (pronounced Stey-sic) grew up in Santa Monica during the fifties and sixties, a time steeped in surfing culture. He has had numerous national and international exhibitions, including his latest one-person exhibition titled Papa Moana, at the Laguna Art Museum. Papa Moana had a focus on Pacific concerns, including the surfing culture, the Polynesian culture, and the Pacific Rim as the focus of a new cultural-economic interest. He received an M.A. from Cal State Northridge and an MFA from Cal State Los Angeles.

Thieme's installation, "A Composition for Two Trains," is fabricated with two circular, brass platforms suspended from the ceiling, and placed adjacent to one another. On the platforms two electric toy train engines travel in counter directions to one another, one a diesel and one steam.

Each brass circle is hung by four piano wires, which vibrate as the engine makes its circle. The vibration is translated by eight Fender Bass electric pick-ups to four 15-inch JVL quadraphonic speakers. "The little trains produce an ominous mantra," Thieme says, "a requiem for 20th century industrialization."

The audio-kinetic sculpture will also incorporate a two-minute slide projection of train images which fade in and out, accompanied by an electronic tape playing train sounds.

Theime received an MFA from UCSD. He has had several exhibitions in California, namely at UCSD, the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, and the Triton Museum of Art, Santa Clara. He also exhibited at Sheffield Polytechnic, Sheffield, England.

The Mandeville Gallery is open from Tuesday through Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Admission is free. Parking vouchers are required on campus.

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