

lures, golf tee practice bar. The fishing lures are toxic green and look like little squids, giving the mock weapon an aura of humor and game-playing. But then the odd combination of wacky artificial elements with wholesome crafts fair perkiness sets in, and you start to get suspicious.

2. Untitled (Sleeping Bag): sleeping bag, pillow cases, buffalo toys with underwear diapers, diaper genie, baby tub, car chamois, golf balls. The ultra-new camping gear and the ridiculous anythingcan-be-a-toy viewpoint of a young child clash nervously in this work. But dig a little deeper and you notice how per-

OCD-level need for tidiness. By now it's getting a little creepy.

3. Untitled (Map): Indian country map, fishing line, dream catcher rings, Johnny Miller videotape, taped Lilly sounds, tent stakes.

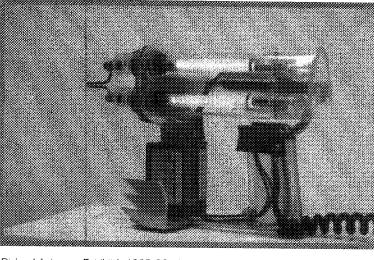
This piece has a sort of Deliverancemeets-Addams Family Values insidiousness to it that makes you want more of the story line.

4. Untitled (Vampire): wrestling mat, rubber bat, soft step, puzzle, vampire teeth, walking cane tips, ant traps, Triominoes, padded toilet seat riser. This one was gray and off in the corner and not as powerful or engaging as the other works. But I have an impression from it that parenthood is a way more dirty and unpleasant job than people think.

5. Untitled (Changing Table): changing table, deer hide, fishing hooks, socks, tarp, rope, fishing line, golf club, indoor golf putting cups. This was my favorite, mostly because the deer hide is stretched across the top and you can bang it like a ritual drum with the golf club. It evokes a moment in an infant's life of incredible vulnerability-lying naked on a table. But it is decorated with a collection of sharp, pointy, strange-looking objects, orchestrated to be clean and pretty as well as forbidding and even dangerous to touch.

The sculptures in this show have clear boundaries, but this discipline is ironic considering the paraphernalia of amusement which comprises the arrangements. Each one reads like a miniature installa-

tion, with no room for imprecision. Composite images are literally constructed out of objects carefully juxtaposed to combine the expansive narrative possibilities of the drawings with the surreal



Richard Ankrom, Exhibit L, 1995-96, aluminum, neon, 3" x 8" x 12", at Angels Gate Cultural Center, San Pedro.

tures. (I single out the drawings and not the paintings for the simple reason that the latter usually have figures in them which, of course, changes everything.)

This series has to do with childhood, innocence, play, sport and adventure, and all those sorts of rugged outdoorsy things along with some awkwardly corresponding imagery from infancy/parenthood. It suggests an adolescence extended indefinitely. But due to the obsessive orderliness and unsettling misuse of objects, it's tone is sinister and threatening rather than jovial. It's also a nod to the tradition of assemblage, with a neurotic anxiety manifested in the subjugation of friendly toys. This is emotionally charged but also formally balanced work, mining the rich premises of adolescent terror and adult recreation. This game has rules, and you don't want to lose.

—Shana Nys Dambrot

New sculpture by Chris Finley closed in October at ACME, Los Angeles.

Shana Nys Dambrot is a freelance writer based in Venice.

'OK to Touch' at Angels **Gate Cultural Center**

ands-on; interactive; viewer participationthese are some of the terms used in

recent decades to describe certain unconventional methods for presentating artwork to the public which overturn the traditional proscriptions against physical contact between artwork and spectator. The title of an energetic new show at Angels Gate Cultural Center leaves little doubt as to its orientation: it is a no-holdsbarred compilation of wallworks, sculptures and installations which not only ignores the traditional touch-me-not barriers, but invites, encourages, insists on physical interaction.

Chris Finley at ACME.

ven though the

pieces on view at ACME, are sculptural works, they relate more closely to Chris Finley's drawings rather than to his previous sculptures. In his works on paper, Finley often creates little bubbles of self-aware objects, floating but not disconnected. concerned more with collective meanings than with completed narratives. They are neat little worlds contained on clean white paper. On the other hand, his sculptures often invite viewer interaction and even randomness; an example being his nesting Tupperware pieces which could be arranged as the viewer saw fit. But for the purposes of this show, try to imagine building a 3D model of one of Finley's drawings by using only materials available at the Sports Chalet.

Much can be learned not from the generic titles of these five works, but rather from the straightforward descriptions of the media involved in each piece, exactly as the information appears on the exhibition checklist. Of the five, four contain carved golf tees, baby bottles, nipples and/or pacifiers, three contain hiking boot shoelaces, wood and steering wheel covers, and two contain bungee cords, bobbers and baby-mobile parts. These elements are the armature that binds the five works of more or less equal scale together thematically. Each piece's individual narrative character is more firmly identified by the rest of their lists.

1. Untitled (Bow): fishing hat, fishing

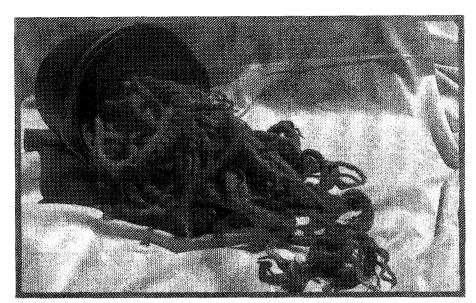


Chris Finley, (top) Untitled (Map), 2000, mixed media, 35" x 33" x 8-1/2"; (bottom) Untitled (Changing Table), 2000, mixed media, 38" x 33" x 22-1/2", at ACME., Los Angeles.

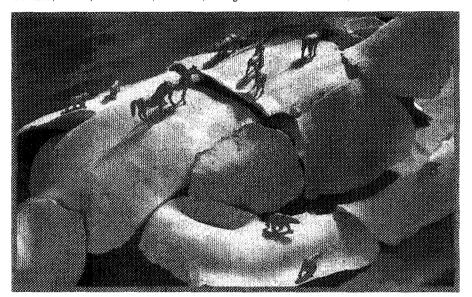
fect, precise and tight all the "toys" are laid out. This is the best example of how these pieces resemble the artist's drawings. Little areas of pattern are cultivated in an expanse of green vinyl, like a garden tended with obvious care and an

melodrama of the mundane in the sculp-

Reviews



Above: Sandra D. Carter, detail of *Night Crawlers*, wool, 12" x 13" x 13"; below: Janice Lloyd Govaerts, *Hillside*, mixed media, 30" x 90", at Angels Gate Cultural Center, San Pedro.



A virtual playground of manipulable objects and sensory stimuli, *OK to Touch* appeals to the child in everyone. Not unlike exhibits in science museums which impart lofty scientific and mathematical principles by way of didactic devices resembling apparatuses normally found only in pinball parlors, the contraptions and conceits of *OK to Touch* draw everyone into a party mood, dragging all beholders onto the dance floor, willing or not.

There is Rufus Snoddy's Icarus, a lifesized mixed-media sculpture with light and sound whose split-open torso flaunts a panoply of exposed guts consisting of electric circuit boards, metal flowers, disinfectant cannisters, and miscellaneous pressure gauges, whose head sports improvised antennae and a scrub brush in place of hair, and whose face is a faux TV screen with a rattan inset. "Icarus," who rolls on skateboard wheels, calls further attention to himself by means of loud, repetitive recorded sounds and, while standing erect, dangles a plumb line, no doubt in order to measure the angle of descent he will follow in "flight." There is Stevie Love's Previous Incarnations, a fluorescent painted drip-molded rubber rope room divider partially covered with fur; then there are Carolyn Applegate's

Cupcakes, soft constructions of polyfilstuffed nylon stockings resembling clusters of ripe, pink breasts, fringed by frilly, Victorian lace borders, and her Reserved Seat, a parti-colored overstuffed armchair as yielding as a cow's udder and as enticing as a trampoline.

Cynthia Minett's Proustian Chambers of Memory features stoppered, wallmounted glass vials labeled "uncork and sniff," which promise to usher the olfactory adventurer into forgotten realms by way of the nasal portals. Marion Lane offers tactile paintings of acrylic on panel, which suggest abstract, bas-relief maps. Heaped with globs of color like that of fake coral seen in tropical fish tanks, Lane has allowed acrylic to harden like lumps of melted wax, often finishing in nippled points, like Hershey's kisses. Holly Tempo, too, has a thing for rubbery color-fields, weighing in with several "canvases" made of monochromatic latex sheets in which rubber bands are intermittently embedded. Fun to feel!

Full-body involvement is demanded by Michael Roof's Sugar High, a strap-on set of wings made from squashed beer and soft drink cans mounted on a wooden armature and hinged with handles. Considerately, the artist has even provided a step from which to make the leap into the void. Lilli Muller's Target Practice conveniently provides male users a tuxedo jacket and female users a cheesecloth dress to be worn while interacting with huge Styrofoam balls to which smaller balls can attach by means of Velcro. Velcro strips are also attached to the jacket and dress users wear. Galvanized steel tubs for storing the smaller balls round out the scene, stationed alongside green Astroturf mats on which the large balls rest. Sandra Carter's Nightcrawlers also spill out of a bucket, and can be manipulated like overgrown worms, while Dave Quick's Backpack with Chicken and Backpack with Siren feature, respectively, a male mannequin whose head strikes a cymbal when a cord is pulled, and a female mannequin whose bullhorn face blares with a siren noise when a button is pushed. These chimerical creatures are offset by whimsical appliances such as beach umbrella frameworks hung with flying chickens, draftsman's lamps, tubas, bungee cords, Coca-Cola crates, and dry cell batteries.

The cavalcade of things to pick up and things to play with continues with Michael Lewis Miller's Psychophysical Prosthetic Wardrobe, a chest of drawers bristling with mysterious articles, and his sandwich man cabinets, Vest of Drawers. Uran Snyder's Peace Weed is a tumble-weed fashioned from bound grape vines and beribboned with "prayers" which visitors inscribe on pieces of colored paper and tie to its branches. David DiMichele contributes a waist-high Plexiglas case holding a Box Containing Approximately 4000 Automatic Drawings, elegant in their finger painting-like simplicity.

With its jump right in and mix it up approach to the museum-going experience, OK to Touch accentuates the evolving relationship between artist and spectator and affords a rewarding look at a kind of art that not only exposes and democratizes its processes and engages visitors in a creative conspiracy, but also casts visitors into a secret mystic realm of direct communion with the artist's mind.

—Rick Gilbert

OK to Touch closed October 22 at Angels Gate Cultural Center, San Pedro.

Rick Gilbert is a freelance writer based in Huntington Beach.

Oregon

David Selleck and Howard Neufeld at Blackfish Gallery

n the artist's statement accompanying his show of large relief prints, Howard Neufeld writes, "... Often the print simply has a mind of its own as I try to find a balance between control and discovery, often feeling somewhere between hope and despair along the way." David Selleck's paintings and drawings, the other half of the September show at Blackfish Gallery, suggest similar mental peregrinations. Both artists produce their work through involved processes, both mental and physical, that require control and make discovery serendipitous. The color reduction technique Neufeld uses in his woodblock prints is exacting and unforgiving. Selleck has more leeway in producing his colors and surfaces, as they are the result of much layering, collage and the working of pastel and charcoal

Neufold likens the feeling "between hope and despair" in his printmaking to life experience, and this is the underlying theme of the current work. All of the prints are in two distinct sections, placed one above the other on large rectangular sheets of paper. The top section in each is abstract; the lower is representational.

David Selleck, $\it My$ Other Hat is a Fedora, 2000, oil on canvas, 48" x 40", at Blackfish Gallery, Portland.





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