



FR8: site specific installations inside used containers and on port land

Angel's Gate in San Pedro (Los Angeles), CA is a place that invites creativity to blossom like the wildflowers that grace the open fields overlooking the Pacific Ocean and Catalina Island. The artist in residency program provides affordable studio space for artists to work in. There is a gallery and a number of workshops for adults and field trips for grade school students. It is one of the last places left on the coast of Southern California that displays its natural beauty alongside the occasional rusted steel sculpture. Angel's Gate also overlooks the Western entrance to the third largest port in the world, the Port of Los Angeles.

According to Marshall Astor, Art Director for Angel's Gate and Curator for FR8 it is the perfect place for site specific installations inside used containers and on port land. He has successfully engaged the Port of Los Angeles in sponsorship for the second year in a row. Last year's event included 6 containers and 8 artists.

This year, Marshall pulled together 13 containers with 15 art projects that also include 9 video artists. Most of the 25 artists were local. Each artist had 10 days to set up their installation.

One of the most meticulously labor intensive projects was "All of These Points Connecting One" by Megan Geckler. It was an entrancing God's eye kaleidoscopic hot pink yantra with fluorescent lights highlighting the different layers that allowed the viewer to visually but not physically discover the architecture of her created space. It was very much like peering into a large many faceted gem. She had a team of assistants working with her in the 90 degree weather and finished her piece early.

A husband and wife team Bean and Dan Gilsdorf from Portland Oregon created "Shipping and Receiving, Part 1". Bean wood-block printed container ships on bolts of fabric and Dan installed them on the inside walls of the container over timed fluorescent lights in the shape of arrows. The buzzing sound of electricity played a part in giving the viewer a sense of anticipation, urgency and endless movement. Christine Nguyen's cave-like environment was dark and at the same time very delicate underlining a theme of nature contained and possibly even suffocated. This reminded me of the strange surreal landscape of the port that even just 100 years ago was a wildlife estuary. The city of San Pedro is so completely covered with cement suffocating its natural beauty but the pin-hole drawings in Nguyen's piece called out for hope and regeneration through light and enlightenment. This could only be seen from inside the dark cavern looking out toward the natural light. A dazzling yet cool respite was Beth Elliot's "String Theory: Time and Tide" with icy blue fishnet covering the walls and floors. She installed kinetic drawings in black sand and white salt and a slow drip salt lick sculpture that described a universe of opposites that are really just the same. The artists Joe Sola and Michael Webster provided comedic relief with their piece entitled "Shakey's". Watching peoples' heads poke through holes was something to behold. The projected videos transported viewers to another world and Mark X Farina's "Alien Landscapes" invited viewers to interact and become performers using an air synthesizer.

Los Angeles has many different art centers spread throughout the city and San Pedro, a harbor centric town full of warehouses and shipping containers, is just one of the unique artist colonies that exist here. There was much to see and do at the Art on the Waterfront Festival 2007 on May 12th in the port town of San Pedro. With family art projects, live music, a skate park, arts and crafts fair, chalk painting and community outreach. It was absolutely thrilling (after all, it's what generations of artists have dreamed of) to see conceptual art in an outdoor and completely open environment where people of all walks of life could be exposed, enjoy and even interact with site specific installation art.

For more info and photos of the FR8 installation go to: <http://www.angelsgateart.org/blog/>