

MAY 23 – JULY 3, 2008

EXHIBITIONS

HOPELESS & OTHERWISE

Simon Allen
April Banks
Mary Walling Blackburn
BLW
Melissa Day
and Protest
Michael Light
Nathan Lynch
Alison Pebworth
The Renaming Bush Street
Project
Jonathan Santos
Mark Tribe
The Visible Collective

Curated by
Valerie Imus

Opening Reception
Friday, May 23, 2008
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Gallery Hours
Tuesday – Saturday
12:00 pm – 6:00 pm

HOPELESS & OTHERWISE
PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Global Honking Ground
a screening organized by 16Beaver

Tuesday, June 24, 7:30 pm, FREE
Location: Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Screening Room,
701 Third St.
Reservations: (415) 978-2787

Southern Exposure presents an evening of short films and videos organized by the ongoing collaborative framework 16Beaver which examines America, and its ground. 16Beaver interprets this as “Ground as the contradiction and tragic failure of capitalism right now; ground rent, for everything that concerns housing; ground to the bone, for flexible labor; ground as the earth itself, over heating and poisoned; ground zero wherever a bomb goes off and people die.

A discussion with members of 16Beaver will follow the screening.

Baby Boomers Fucked Everything
a psychedelic light show

Thursday, July 3, 10:00 pm, FREE
Reservations: (415) 863-2141

Please join us for this epic journey of sight and sound exploring the war's effect on the American psyche to mark Independence Day and the closing of Hopeless and Otherwise. This event is organized by three Los Angeles based artists whose interests include counter alternative cultures, rhizomatic plants and color praxis.

OTHER PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Scream Print I and II Final Event

Friday, May 30, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Location: Columbia Park Boys & Girls Club, Teen Center

Lead Artist: Piero Passacantando

Artist Assistant: Neftali Carreira

Community Partner: Columbia Park Boys & Girls Club

The exciting culmination of a year long class, Scream Print I and II, a silk screening class. SoEx and the Club present "iThink": A Fashion Show for Thought. The event will include a fashion show of silk screened clothes made by youth artist participants, a live dance performance, food made by young artists and club members, and a slide show/video short of the students who were involved in the class. Students created a socially conscious line of t-shirts under the concept "iThink", a brand they created as a critical response to the already popular brands iPod and iPhone.

Being True

Exhibition Dates: May 19 – June 5, 2008

Closing Reception: Thursday, June 5, 6:00 – 9:00 pm

Location: Hamburger Eyes Photo Epicenter, 26 Lilac Street (at Mission and 24th Streets)

Come see SoEx's Youth Advisory Board's photographs alongside Being True: 22 Years of American Youth exhibition including 22 contemporary photographers. YAB members, in collaboration with Hamburger Eyes, capture the images in their everyday lives.

Mix

a potluck gathering and bicycle-powered compost mixer

Saturday, June 14, 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Join Wowhaus and Southern Exposure for a community compost mixer. Participants are invited to bring a dish featuring seasonal, local produce. Please bring a dish that generates some vegetable scraps to contribute to the mixer and pick up tips for making your own compost mixer and compost. The Wowhaus Mixer helps overcome many obstacles to urban composting, offering a compact, efficient, and fun means of reducing waste and enriching garden soil.

Continuing on after the event, gallery visitors are encouraged to bring in vegetable scraps and to power the spinner by riding the bicycle.

Mix is part of FREERANGE, a new series of events, walks, meeting, and public projects developed by a group of artists who work deals with issues of the environment."



Valerie Imus is a member of Southern Exposure's curatorial committee. She is a Bay Area independent curator and the Exhibitions Manager at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

HOPELESS AND OTHERWISE

By Valerie Imus

"The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function. One should, for example, be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise." – F. Scott Fitzgerald

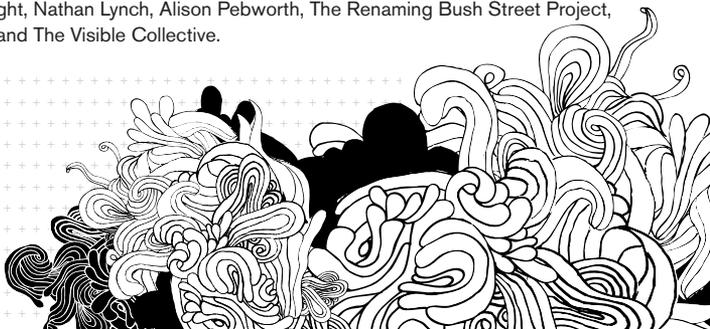
Being an American has rarely been so depressing. Current US policy inspires a maelstrom of international opprobrium. Presidential candidates deliver rhetoric of hope and change which experience suggests is an attempt to co-opt the desire for radical transformation for an agenda that will do little to upset the demands of capital. How does one find a sense of hope given the seemingly endless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the use of the Patriot Act to erode individual rights, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the ongoing disappearance of species and continued drastic changes in our global climate?

The specter of global climate change makes this a desperately frightening time, but an American culture based on greed, self-importance and an enormous sense of entitlement that has in large part led us to this crisis is not a new phenomenon, but rather the historic norm for the US. These values are the foundations of our national identity rather than an historically anomalous situation that can be changed by electing a new Democratic president. To deny this fact seems naïve and simplistic, an expression of American exceptionalism – the Reaganesque belief in the US as a land of eternal possibilities, where economic and historical truths don't apply. Perhaps a solipsistic interest in Americanness could be seen as another version of national exceptionalism, but the works in this show attempt to negotiate this dilemma by engaging with their own imbricated status within this ideology rather than simply claiming to stand in simple opposition to these traditional narratives of history

Vietnam War-era protests are often alluded to as a foil to the current relative inactivity of oppositional politics, and though nostalgia can become an impediment to political change, by leading us to view history as a romantic abstraction, there is pedagogical merit in investigating historic anti-war activity in order to find new ways of negotiating our moment's crisis. Looking at both the precedents for our current political situation and the historical opposition to them allows us to see that while some situations may appear to be hopeless, there are models of resistance which can, at the very least, inspire us today.

The artists in *Hopeless and Otherwise* question our relationship to history, activism and faith. They address our contemporary conception of American identities within the context of our historic narratives and myths. They negotiate the current pervasive atmosphere of doom and powerlessness by looking for methods of transformation or absurdly grappling with their loss of faith in this bizarre place we call home. Their explorations acknowledge the challenges and direness of our current situation, while persistently reframing and engaging alternative perspectives on being American. Their work calls us to find our own imaginative paths to engagement while acknowledging the real politico-emotional distress many of us now feel.

Curated by Valerie Imus and featuring work by Siemon Allen, April Banks, Mary Walling Blackburn, BLW, Melissa Day, Michael Light, Nathan Lynch, Alison Pebworth, The Renaming Bush Street Project, Jonathan Santos, Mark Tribe, and The Visible Collective.



SIEMON ALLEN

Cards, 2005



DETAIL OF CARDS, 2005

Simon Allen's installation is a presentation of a portion of his collection of military trading cards released in the United States between 1938 and 2003. The entire collection consists of more than 2,500 individual cards, including sets from the recent Afghanistan campaign (Enduring Freedom, 2001) as well as editions from the Cold War (Fight the Red Menace, 1951), the Korean War (Freedom's War, 1950) and World War II (Uncle Sam/Home Defense, 1941). The display begins with the especially gory 1938 series Don't Let It Happen Here and comes full circle to end with a very different but equally horrific 2003 edition of Don't Let It Happen Here. This titular repetition underlines the fact that cultural misunderstandings accompanying current international wars are not historical anomalies—they exist along a continuum of American prejudice and propaganda, the overwhelming breadth of which is embodied by the expanse of trading cards arrayed on the gallery walls.

www.simonallen.org

APRIL BANKS

The Hand I Eat With, 2008



THE HAND I EAT WITH,
2008

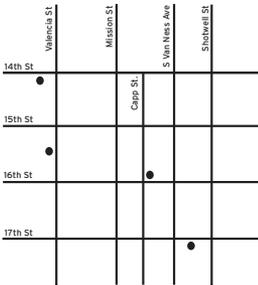
April Banks has conducted extensive independent research into the practices of chocolate farming and manufacturing. Her series *The Hand I Eat With* implicates the United States' consumer economy in the perpetuation of horrifying labor conditions. American chocolate-making corporations monopolize the industry and control the cost of cacao, ensuring a continuation of forced child labor on cacao farms. This dynamic is yet another enactment of the way that the U.S. functions internationally, creating products and marketing lifestyles that mask the horrible living conditions and economic and environmental crises created by both our trade policies and the manufacturing of these products.

For additional information on chocolate production: www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/cocoa/background.html

www.aprilbanks.com

MARY WALLING BLACKBURN

This Dream, This Frequency, 2006-08



AUDIO LOCATIONS
INCLUDE:

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE,
417 14TH ST
**INTERSECTION FOR THE
ARTS,** 446 VALENCIA ST
THE LAB, 2948 16TH ST
ROOT DIVISION,
3175 17TH ST

BLW

Queen Mother Moore At Green Haven Federal Prison, 2007



STILL FROM *QUEEN
MOTHER MOORE AT
GREEN HAVEN
FEDERAL PRISON,*
2004-07

Mary Walling Blackburn contacted American soldiers stationed in Iraq via MySpace and asked them to send her descriptions of their dreams. She then recorded an actor reading these brief texts interspersed with fragments of recorded dreams from ancient clay tablets from Mesopotamia. *This Dream, This Frequency* uses micro-radio transmitters to send the recordings out into different locations in San Francisco. Walkers or drivers tune in to 88.9FM and listen to the dream until they move out of range. Images from the dreaming minds of soldiers coalesce with those recorded thousands of years before in the same location, and the resulting text is fed into the electromagnetic spectrum, and apprehended on San Francisco's sidewalks and streets.

www.welcomedoubleagent.wordpress.com.

Rozalinda Borcila, Sarah Lewison and Julie Wyman comprise the artist-activist group BLW, which explores the rich and messy territory between historical context and contemporary reinterpretation of politically powerful texts. The group memorializes and re-speaks recorded texts from radical media to audiences vastly different from their originals. Conceived as a live performance rather than a video piece, *Queen Mother Moore At Greenhaven Federal Prison* experiments with the discomfort and awkwardness of trying on someone else's words and explores the potential of this act to channel empowerment and to conjure inspiration and motivation for speaking about powerlessness and voicelessness. Queen Mother (Audley) Moore was an African American civil rights leader and a black nationalist. Her 1973 appearance at Greenhaven Federal Prison was sponsored by Think Tank, a community group organized to address the relationship between conditions in the black communities and high rates of incarceration. BLW's redelivery of Queen Mother Moore's words potentially could be interpreted as an act of theft or colonization—or could it, in the group's words, “point to the remaining Sisyphian tasks at hand, the unresolved issues, and lead toward the production of new possibilities of interlocution?”

www.carbonfarm.us/blw

MELISSA DAY

Peace I give to you (not as the world gives it), 2005-06



STILL FROM *PEACE I
GIVE TO YOU (NOT AS
THE WORLD GIVES IT)*,
2005-06

In Melissa Day's video *Peace I give to you (not as the world gives it)*, Ehren Tool, a former U.S. Marine strides into an idyllic Western American landscape of rolling, green hills singing the old Christian hymn "Peace I Give to You." He reverentially kneels as if he is beginning a very gentle ritual, but his subsequent brutal roll down the hillside seems to be a way of merging into the earth and of thrusting peace into the American landscape. Like a desperate, absurdist Ana Mendieta, he plunges his body violently into the effort of what would otherwise seem like a playful act. The peaceful California landscape, his lumberjack-like attire and the old-time hymn suggest romantic portrayals of early American westward expansion and the Christian ethos that framed it and at times justified its more exploitive practices. The pain and breathlessness we hear as he continues rolling and singing is at sharp variance with the noble sentiments of the song, but also reminds us how exhausting it is in these times to work for peace and maintain hope or faith of any kind. Day, in all of her work, addresses a radical ambivalence in the status of Christian faith in the US whose ostensible messages of peace are often co-opted as moral cover by the right wing for a violent agenda.

www.mmd.ca

MICHAEL LIGHT

Two Burials And A Utility Corridor Looking Northwest; Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills Cemetery, Los Angeles, CA, 2007



TWO BURIAL AND A UTILITY CORRIDOR LOOKING NORTHWEST; FOREST LAWN HOLLYWOOD HILLS CEMETERY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 2007

Michael Light's lush and riveting aerial photographs are simultaneously gorgeous and horrifying, drawing our attention to the devastation wrought on the American landscape by constant expansion. His series on the built terrain of Los Angeles includes majestic, cinematic scenes of the seemingly idyllic Forest Lawn cemetery in Burbank. From the air we have a broad perspective on land use and the capital-driven urge toward constant development of not only our sprawling lived spaces, which can be seen in the peripheries of the image, but the built landscapes that house and honor our dead and in preparations for future gravesites.

www.michaellight.net

NATHAN LYNCH

All the President's Noses, 2000-08 Lowered Forcast, 2008



Every morning of George W. Bush's first term in office, Nathan Lynch sat with his New York Times and an X-acto knife and systematically removed Bush's nose from his face in the newspaper's photographs. Lynch continued this process—cataloguing the photos and the castrated specimens in designated boxes—until early in Bush's second term when Lynch couldn't bear looking at the face any longer. This obsessive act of symbolic dismemberment was a type of therapy for dark times. Lynch's black clouds hovering low over the floor of the gallery represent the ominous sense of bleak and horrible possibilities that has moved from the horizon into our daily living spaces.

www.nathanlynch.com

SELECTION FROM *ALL THE PRESIDENT'S NOSES*, 2000-08

ALISON PEBWORTH

...and then there was man, 2008

Boreal Forest Blockade, 2007

Genesis in the Retort, 2007

Hopi vs. Peabody Coal, 2007

Powhatan's Legacy, 2007



*BOREAL FOREST
BLOCKADE, 2007*

Alison Pebworth's work incorporate symbols and heroic figures from American history as they suggest narrative lines to explain our current predicaments. In her banner *Genesis in the Retort*, the three figures being cooked down in an alchemical process are taken from drawings by an artist who accompanied René Goulaine de Laudonnière's 16th-century French expedition through what is now the southeastern United States. The fire is lit by Cotton Mather, a Puritan preacher; the flames are fanned by Andrew Jackson, the U.S. president largely responsible for the forced relocation of Native Americans; and the byproduct of this mystical process is George W. Bush.

Pebworth's drawings present Native American figures within the context of a legacy of the exploitation of land and other natural resources, pointing to the North American tendency to fabricate a romanticized, infantilized or over-simplified conception of the natural world and this country's native peoples while simultaneously wreaking vast destruction on the same places or people. Pebworth's *Hopi vs. Peabody Coal* depicts Hopi Kachina nature spirits in a despairing protest of the Peabody Coal Company's contamination of Hopi and Navajo potable water sources. Her *Boreal Forest Blockade* portrays the longest running native blockade, the obstruction of a logging road to protest against ongoing clear-cut logging in Ontario, Canada (*Grassy Narrows vs. Abitibi and Weyerhaeuser*).
www.alisonpebworth.com

THE RENAMING BUSH STREET PROJECT

Survey: Renaming Bush Street, 2007-2008



BUSH AND PRESIDIO, 2007

Though San Francisco's Bush Street most likely was named for J. P. Bush, who assisted Jasper O'Farrell in his surveys of the city in the 1840s, the potential associations with our 41st or 43rd president spurred Amber Hasselbring, Jerome Mast Grand and Eric Savage of the Corndog Brothers to form the Renaming Bush Street Project. As its name implies, the project sought to query San Francisco residents about the possibility of changing the street's name. The respondents ranged from those passionately in favor of the idea to those deeply upset at the notion of altering the public face of the city in any way. By confronting our awareness of local history—or lack thereof—and our relationship to tradition, the artists urge us to consider our urban environment and its history as fluid, participatory and rewritable. They also underscore Americans' often-willful ignorance of history, a condition that seems to characterize the current Bush Administration and contributes to our political missteps around the world.

www.art-eco.org/renamingbushstreet.html

JONATHAN SANTOS

Gettysburg Address, 2006-08 A Minute of Silence, 2008



STILL FROM A MINUTE OF SILENCE, 2008

Jonathan Santos's yellow police tape is printed with the text of the Gettysburg Address in Morse code. The final line of Abraham Lincoln's speech dedicating the site of an American Civil War battle calls to mind the questionable causes of the current war in Iraq: "We here highly resolved that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." Placing the text in a new context, Santos conflates our current sites of military activity with crime scenes and draws parallels between victims of violent crime and those who have died in battle.

His piece *A Minute of Silence* is an imagined point of view of soldiers as they fell dying in the battle that began the American Revolution. Both Santos's works in this exhibition acknowledge and memorialize the soldiers involved in the horrors of battles past and present while addressing our contemporary relationship to public sites and war memorials.

www.jonathansantos.net

MARK TRIBE

Port Huron Project 2: The Problem Is Civil Obedience, 2007

The Problem Is Civil Obedience, 2008



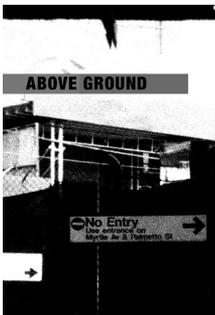
*THE PROBLEM IS CIVIL
OBEDIENCE, 2008*

Mark Tribe's Port Huron Project, named after Tom Hayden's 1962 New Left Manifesto, is a series of reenactments of protest speeches from the New Left movements of the 1960s and '70s. Each event is staged at the site of the original speech, and is delivered by a performer to an audience of invited guests and passers-by. Port Huron Project 2: The Problem Is Civil Obedience is a video documenting the July 14, 2007 reenactment of a speech given by Howard Zinn in 1971 on Boston Common. As the camera captures the sparse crowd, other video cameras recording the scene, and the applause following the unnervingly resonant statement "we need to do something to disturb that calm, smiling, murderous president in the White House," the line between genuine, spontaneous response and performance, as well as between the past and the present, becomes ambiguous. The commitment and zeal of the New Left activists evokes both nostalgia for an impassioned time of resistance and melancholy over the now-apparent limitations of Vietnam War-era protests to enact definitive political changes, as evidenced by the eerie parallels between that time and our current situation.

www.nothing.org

THE VISIBLE COLLECTIVE

Above Ground, 2006



ABOVE GROUND, 2006

Established by Donna Golden and Naeem Mohaiemen, Visible Collective was a temporary, revolving coalition of artists and activists working from 2004 to 2007 on projects about national security panic. For the LES Tenement Museum, Golden taught public art techniques to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students, Aimara Lin, Avidah Moussavian and Uzma Rizvi. Students then used loaned cameras to document their immediate surroundings in the outer boroughs of New York. These random snapshots were bleached and damaged by Mohaiemen and collaged with milestones from U.S. immigration history.

www.disappearedinamerica.org

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

Dynamic, cutting edge art, education, and community programs since 1974.

Located in San Francisco's Mission District, Southern Exposure is a 34 year-old, non-profit, artist-run organization dedicated to presenting diverse, innovative, contemporary art, arts education, and related programs and events in an accessible environment.

Southern Exposure reaches out to diverse audiences and serves as a forum and resource center to provide extraordinary support to the Bay Area's arts and educational communities. Activities range from exhibitions of local, regional, and international visual artists' work, education programs, lectures, panel discussions, and performances. Southern Exposure is dedicated to giving artists—whether they are exhibiting, curating, teaching, or learning—an opportunity to realize ideas for projects that may not otherwise find support.

Gallery Exhibitions Program

Featuring solo, thematic, and juried exhibitions, Southern Exposure offers emerging artists the opportunity to work in formats and contexts that extend and challenge their artistic development and exposure to new audiences. Known for their consistent high quality, Southern Exposure's exhibitions are pivotal in many artists' careers. Southern Exposure's exhibitions are developed by an artist-run Curatorial Committee made up of a rotating group of ten artists and staff.

Public Art: SoEx Off-Site

Southern Exposure's public art programs seek to commission and present new work by emerging artists that intervenes and interacts in the social and political spheres beyond the space of gallery. SoEx supports and encourages these practices as few venues support emerging artists working in the public. The recently completed, acclaimed yearlong series, SoEx Offsite, commissioned eight public art projects and related programs investigating artists' strategies for exploring and mapping public space

Artists in Education Program (AIE)

Southern Exposure's nationally recognized Artists in Education (AIE) program brings together diverse youth, artists, schools and community organizations in a dynamic series of innovative programs. AIE offers youth opportunities to learn critical, artistic, vocational, and cultural experiences beyond the traditional school environment. It also offers professional teaching opportunities for local emerging artists to become arts educators, extending their practice into the community.

Artists Resources

In recent years, SoEx has actively worked to increase the services we provide for artists. In 2007, SoEx launched the Alternative Exposure Grant Program, a major new initiative that offers nearly \$50,000 in grants to local artists and groups working in the visual arts annually. Other resources include the SoExchange: Professional Development Workshop series, teaching opportunities and more.

Publications

Southern Exposure Publications provide the public with access programs, stimulates dialogue and engagement with artwork, and encourages critical writing about the arts.

Public Programs and Events

Lectures, workshops, performances, artists' talks, screenings, educational programs, experiences and symposia create a forum on contemporary aesthetic, sociopolitical and cultural issues. Through their inter-disciplinary nature, Southern Exposure's events bring topical issues to a broader audience.

Southern Exposure would like to thank Valerie Imus, Anne Ray, Kevin Cook, Kyle Jeffery McDonald, YBCA and extends a very special thanks to the exhibiting artists."

Southern Exposure is generously funded in part by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Fleishhacker Foundation, Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, the LEF Foundation, the Louis R. Lurie Foundation, the Miranda Lux Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Nelson Fund of the Community Foundation Silicon Valley, the Nicholson Family Foundation, the Bernard Osher Foundation, the Potrero Nuevo Fund of the Tides Foundation, The San Francisco Arts Commission's Cultural Equity Grants Program, The San Francisco Foundation, the Morris Stulsaft Foundation, Timbuk2, the Zellerbach Family Foundation, and through the support of Catherine Armsden and Lewis Butler, Raquel Baldocchi, Rena Bransten Philanthropic Fund, Amy Charles, Michael Christman, Mary Conrad, Robin Ducot, Mark Dwight Foundation, Robert and Elizabeth Fisher Fund, The Larry S. Goldfarb Foundation, Ann Hatch, Michael Rosenthal, Tracy Wheeler and Paul Rauschelbach, and Southern Exposure's members.