

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

**Mike Lai**

*The Legendary Lions vs. the Fists of Fury*  
One-Night Solo  
Performance Project  
Friday, January 26, 2010  
8PM

**Lacey Jane Roberts**

*Building it Up to Tear it Down*  
Site Specific Installation

**Genevieve Quick**

*Scopes and Scapes*  
Sculpture

**Andy Vogt**

*Gray Area*  
Site Specific Installation

Gallery Hours

Tuesday - Saturday  
12:00 pm - 6:00 pm

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

**Opening Reception**

Friday, January 8, 2010  
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

**Artist Talks**

Friday, January 8, 2010  
6:30 pm

**Recipes for an Encounter**

Thursday, January 28, 2010  
7:00 - 9:00 pm  
A book launch with performances by The Center for Tactical Magic, Matt Volla and others; presentation by Berin Golonu, Candice Hopkins and Marisa Jahn.  
Cosponsored by REV- and Western Front

**An Evening of Indian Music: From the Classical to Bollywood**

with Robin Sukhadia  
Saturday, February 20, 2010  
6:30 - 9:00 pm  
A discussion followed by a classical tabla (north Indian drums) performance.

ARTISTS IN EDUCATION (AIE) PROGRAMS

**Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Walk Through Walls**

January 8 - February 15, 2010

Lead Artist: Ariel Roman  
Assistant Artist: Kim Sikora  
Intern: Ariel Sanchez  
YAB: Pedro Aquino, Andrea Bautista, Lorenzo Campbell, Betsy Espinoza, Cesia Gutierrez, Javier Gutierrez, Angela Hernandez, Daniel Lemus, Diego Luna, Alejandro Mis-Cauich, Christian Mejia, Ernesto Montoya, Benito Rodriguez, Karla Ocampo, Julio Soria, Antoino Spruell, Lucy Thrupp, and Sabina Minotti.

The Youth Advisory Board is proud to present *Walk Through Walls*, on view in the Artists In Education Program Space. *Walk Through Walls* is the result of weekly dialogs and art explorations on how we alter our immediate spaces to accommodate our needs, desires and reactions to existence. From building play forts as children, to having secret meeting spaces and "intervening" in public and private spaces, YAB asks how our actions reflect or depict our ideas of utopia, paradise, and safe spaces. Photographs and large collaborative prints in *Walk Through Walls* examine the agency of being everyday creators and YAB's impact in our surroundings.

# Mike Lai *The Legendary Lions vs. the Fists of Fury* SPECIAL ONE NIGHT SOLO PERFORMANCE PROJECT

ESSAY BY WESTON TERUYA

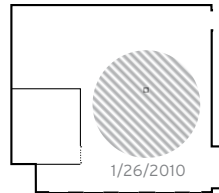
Chinese lion dancers bounce across the floor with staccato movements to the beat of drums and cymbal crashes. After sizing up the performance, dancers draped in oversized, disembodied replicas of Bruce Lee's fists of fury face off against the lion. The sharp response of a turntable needle at a DJ's fingers accent their array of dynamic moves. The showdown, Mike Lai's performance piece titled *The Legendary Lions Versus the Fists of Fury*, matches the acrobatic athleticism of a traditional lion dance against the analog approximations of martial arts movie special effects used by the Bruce Lee dance crew. This kinetic scene, orchestrated by Lai for his solo show at Southern Exposure, seems equal parts *America's Best Dance Crew* spectacle, climactic battle between martial arts masters, and nod to the celebratory blessing typically signified by a lion dance. But these points in his referential constellation are only some of the cultural markers he has been drawing down for years as part of his artistic practice. His recombinant performances, centering on the artist (often in the guise of Lee), use Lee's pop culture versatility to playfully suggest the flexible possibilities of remixed identities.

Lai has a particular affinity for Lee in his *Game of Death* mode: tightly sheathed in a yellow tracksuit with black stripes running up the sides. In *The Legendary Lions vs the Fists of Fury*, the hallmark contrasting stripes immediately identify the disembodied dancing fists as Lee's. This is Lee from his showdown against basketball legend Kareem Abdul Jabbar, a cinematic scene highlighting Lee's own cross-cultural resonance. This is also Lee after his tragic death mid-film shoot, in a performance completed by a motley mix of stand-ins, recut stock footage, and his face crudely pasted over some poor wannabe's unseen mug; his own film emphasizing that fissure between Lee the person and Lee the immortal persona, a character to be assumed by others.

Over time, Lee's has become an outsized, fantastical identity. His tracksuit, as Lai has suggested, is a superhero



Mike Lai, *The Legendary Lions vs. the Fists of Fury*, 2010



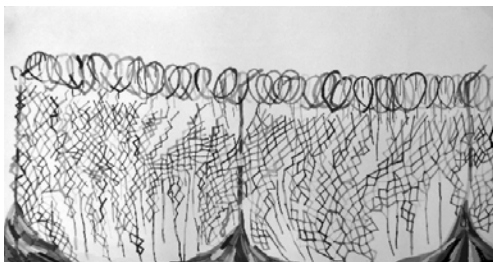
cape-hypercolor drag that combines assumed identity and masculine desire. Fans from *Ultimate Fighting Championship* combatants to the Asiaphiles of the Wu-Tang Clan have paid their respects to Lee. Yet as desire is often intertwined with repulsion, the label "bruce lee" also can be a racial invective. For East Asian American men with similarly lithe body types, the name can be a playground dismissal—a suggestion of chop-socky cartoonishness and broken English. For Lai, being called "bruce lee" by classmates on arrival at high school in the United States stirred mixed feelings: on one hand, the name flattened him, reducing his identity to a celluloid ghost; on the other, it seemed heroic to be viewed as akin to the original Asian stud.

Lai finds ways to both embrace and combat this conflation. With each new cultural iteration of Lee that he imagines, he flips any singular reading of the legendary figure. In a small 2005 performance, Lai took on the image of "The Bride" as performed by Uma Thurman in *Kill Bill*, vamping in a men's bathroom mirror in a Lee-inspired tracksuit. Using a cross-racial, gender-bending, temporal collapse, he complicated the fixed premises on which the original icon was built.

For his performance at Southern Exposure, Lai turns to an intracultural dialogue, arranging a battle between living tradition and filmic showmanship. The conflict between older and newer guards arises as a familiar trope in the films Lai references. In *Legendary Lions*, the competitive pairing leaves open the possibility for triumph and failure for either group. By raising the question of tradition in his larger grouping of referents, Lai undercuts the bedrock of cultural essentialisms, suggesting that their existence is as potentially momentary as any other point of connection. No matter how fierce the dance-off, Lai reminds us of the generative possibilities of a cultural representation like Lee and that they can also be a source of connection, wonder, and play. ●

MIKE LAI was born in Hong Kong in 1980, and came to the United States as a student in 1993. He received his BA from Davidson College, North Carolina and MFA from San Francisco Art Institute in 2005. His work has been exhibited nationally, including Center for Outdoor Contemporary Art, GenArt San Francisco, Queen's Nails Annex Gallery and Southern Exposure. He received an *Individual Artist Commission* from the San Francisco Arts Commission in 2007. Mike Lai lives and works in San Francisco.

WESTON TERUYA is an artist and member of Southern Exposure's Curatorial Committee. Typically taking the form of cut paper collaged drawings and sculptures, his work manipulates elements from the built environment to create new narratives examining power, social history and possibility. He currently works for the San Francisco Arts Commission *Cultural Equity Grants Program*.



Lacey Jane Roberts, *Building it Up to Tear it Down* (preliminary drawing), 2010

Lacey Jane Roberts has been recognized nationwide for her groundbreaking textile work. Before graduating from CCA in 2007 with an MFA in sculpture and an MA in visual criticism, Robert's sensational intervention "& Crafts" addressed the school's removal of the word "Craft" from its name. Roberts knitted a bright orange, six-foot-long "& Crafts" and appended it to the California College of the Arts signage above the school's entrance. Craft brought this Detroit native to CCA, and its dismissal provided an opportunity to demonstrate the inherent feminism—and for her, queerness—of woven materiality.

Her newest work, entitled *Building It Up to Tear It Down*, combines craft with commentary in the form of a huge and provocative knit fence. It reinvents this symbol of oppression and simultaneously explores and challenges notions of boundary. In place of borders, it unfurls a stunning textile path to freedom.

When Roberts left the Bay Area for a studio residency and teaching job in New York City, she settled in a place where her art practice and personal history deeply intersect. She now divides her time between a residency at the Museum of Art and Design and a studio in the outer Bronx. The latter is the former barbershop of a large residence for children in the foster care system; she uses it as both a studio and classroom. It came with a barber chair, a sink, and the

smell of years of hair straightening tonic. There is no irony in what she sees from her studio: a shimmering turquoise swimming pool surrounded by a heavy gray, rusted barbed wire fence. It faces out; admittance regulated year round. She knows the drill; she's lived it, not just as an artist and teacher, but also as a charge.

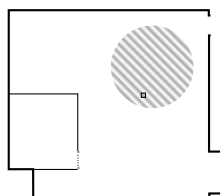
When Roberts was in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, she was compulsorily enrolled in a school for troubled youth. In this punitive environment, every aspect of her life was controlled: contact with friends and family restricted while "ratting" publicly rewarded. Normative assimilation was the only path to more privilege, even if it was a performance.

Twenty years later, Roberts draws on this schema to make work that explores barriers big and small. She queers the space, tangles the linear, and tells a story with this 40-foot fence made out of hand-cranked Technicolor yarn and topped with razor wire. She uses the pink and sparkly *Cool Corder™* and *Barbie Knitting Machine™* children's toys to enact the knit-and-sew endurance sport of making each link and barb—undoubtedly uncharted territory for Barbie hyper-femininity. Roberts likes that that the method "infuses [her] work with an even more amateur and low way of making." She describes herself as having an "effeminate butch masculine identity." She knits to disentangle queerness, she makes irresistible barbed wire fences as a feminist act, and she deftly deploys an admittedly "Crayola" palette to appeal to our basic senses.

*Building it Up to Tear It Down* is likely Robert's last fence. In person, it begs to be touched. Soft red yarn fades into vibrant fuchsia, then to teal and gold, and back again to rose. There are holes and breaks, and graffiti-style drips of yarn. Unlike her earlier knit fences, this fence is porous and offers multiple places to cross. This permeability breaks her established code: it does not separate, dominate, or enforce hegemonic systems. *Building it Up to Tear It Down* is playful, soft, sensual, and yielding. ●

LACEY JANE ROBERTS holds a MFA in Fine Arts and MA in Visual and Critical Studies from California College of the Arts. She completed a BA in Studio Art and a BA in English from the University of Vermont. Her work has been shown most recently in The Bedford Gallery, The San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, the San Francisco Museum of Craft and Folk Art, Fresh Meat in the Gallery, Little Tree Gallery, The Headlands Center for the Arts, and Naomi Arin Contemporary Art.

JESSICA TULLY is a member of the Southern Exposure Curatorial Committee. She is a conceptual artist working at the intersection of culture and politics. From hip hop water ballet to a rock opera of live construction equipment to voter education, her site-specific performances, videos, drawings and campaigns are set within socially charged public spaces. Originally from the East Coast, she grew up in downtown San Jose, CA, rooted in urban composting and matzo Brie making traditions.



# Genevieve QUICK

## SCOPES & SCAPES

ESSAY BY VALERIE IMUS

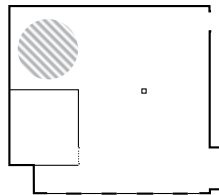
I sometimes wonder why science fiction often seems to feature references to outdated technologies and past genres—noirish voice-overs, rotary phones, cowboys. Is it to suggest the absurdity of fantasizing about the future's cure-all innovations, or to make us feel more at home in the unknown by depicting history as cyclical? Genevieve Quick's retro-futurist optical devices evoke that uneasy sense of nostalgia, absurdity, and simultaneous wonderment.

Quick creates visual prostheses based on an outmoded mechanics of looking. Painstakingly constructed entirely from white paper and foam core, these intricately fabricated, delicate ocular instruments are both conceptual and actual models of the observation process based on the technology of a camera obscura. On first glance, her sculpture *MacroScopicSpace* appears to be a pristine, white camera with an extended lens on a tripod, but its construction is far more complex: light reflecting from a tiny, lone tree on a paper island bounces to a series of mirrors and lenses, to be projected on a sheet of acetate at the opposite side of the device—a softened image of a romantic and melancholy tableau.

As devices for viewing, Quick's sculptures often function as extensions of the observer's body. The *TPP Unit* (*Tellurian Projection Pack*), her shoulder-harnessed viewing mechanism—portable and ready for fieldwork—looks like a futuristic jet pack for the intrepid Victorian explorer of pastoral terrain. The practical size and functionality implies usability, but the ephemerality and absurd redundancy of purpose renders the device fantastical and impractical as an actual tool. Blocking the position of one eye is a tube with a small aperture that allows the obscured scene to bounce through a series of four lenses and ultimately be projected onto a small screen on the backpack of the wearer. The device turns the process of perception inside out and makes mere observation into an absurdly elaborate and meandering experience; moving the scene out of the wearer's line of vision and instead revealing it to someone who might be standing behind effectively allows the wearer to bear her own perspective on her back.



Genevieve Quick,  
*MacroScopicSpace* (detail), 2010



In recasting the camera obscura from a darkened room to an object strapped to the observer's body, Quick creates a personal theater of observation, or a portable mind's-eye cinema. This dual planar conceptualization of the observer and re-envisioned image of the observed parallels both a proto-modern visualization model and current high-tech disembodied methods of observation, used for instance in endoscopic surgery or space exploration. This distanced and indirect relationship to an observed landscape also models a contemporary urban disconnection from the natural world. Camera obscuras were popularized during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, when landscape was commonly seen as something available for exploration, analysis, and domination by a specifically formulated subject. One can argue that the modern interest in space exploration is an extension of this perspective.

The Hubble, like the camera obscura, is a tool used to frame and more closely examine the scenic, to transform the natural world into something that can be easily contemplated and understood. The Hubble telescope and Viking spacecraft are extrapolated forms of visual prostheses, so far removed as to be impossible for us to look through—or even to see—but enabling us to look at images beyond our natural scope. Because images of these modern instruments are so hard to come by, Quick's negative drawings of the Hubble and Viking1 are based on downloaded images of models and CGI representations.

These devices, and our challenges in conceptualizing them, inject increasing distance between the observer, what's being observed, and the tool enabling that observation, further abstracting the process of visualization. The proliferation of photographic equipment and its expanded capability to produce images of objects infinitesimally small or far away has shifted the ways that we envision the world, while promising to forge a more profound relationship to the truth. Quick playfully ponders the romance and nostalgia within this notion by simultaneously reconstructing past and current mechanics of looking and making our processes of revisualization more palpable. ●

GENEVIEVE QUICK received her M.F.A. in sculpture from San Francisco Art Institute and B.A. in political science from the University of Michigan. Quick has shown at the Walter and Mc Bean Galleries at San Francisco Art Institute, Gallery Paule Anglim, Villa Montalvo, Headlands Center for the Arts, the Lab, and AOV. She has also been awarded the *Louise Bourgeois Residency* at Yaddo and the John and Susan Diekman Fellowship at Djerassi. Quick has contributed writings to *Shotgun Review*, *The Present Group*, and is a regular contributor to *Art Practical*.

VALERIE IMUS is an artist, curator and member of the curatorial committee at Southern Exposure. She also spends some time managing exhibitions at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, is sturdy enough to withstand a strong breeze and occasionally appears as herself in films.

GRAY AREA

# ANDY VOGT

ESSAY BY KELSEY NICHOLSON

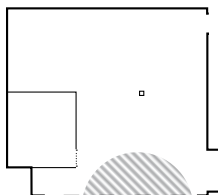


Andy Vogt, *Gray Area* (preliminary drawing), 2010

*"The line is a whole, an identity, for a particular place and time." –Fred Sandback*

For Andy Vogt, the idea of line manifests in the form of wood lathe. The strips are gutted from older homes, separated from its plaster binding and no longer holding a commercially viable purpose. The scrapped remains are tossed aside into the trash heap. Following an artistic tradition of making use of materials non grata, Vogt collects this refuse and considers the lathe as a pure material. By pure, the artist is referring to the notion that although we can recognize the material's history, time and methodologies have rendered it useless. This exile from conventional to indeterminate worth is what frees Vogt to see only the line and tonality offered by what is now a simple piece of wood.

With his new large-scale installation at Southern Exposure, Vogt's focus is to capture a moment of light as it traverses the windowpanes and makes contact with the interior. This light is captured and channeled within a built perspective, highlighting where rays converge and a new space is created. Two views are used to complete one vision. Examples of these presented dualities are; beams of light, wall and



floor, bisecting lines, materials receding and protruding. Similar to the way that Fred Sandback could take a piece of string to intersect a space with an angled plane, Vogt's simple techniques of alternating line direction and tonal shifts of the lathe creates depth and form. By constructing flat planes within space, Vogt undertakes composing three-dimensional isometric drawings.

A (zero) point of origin is where the three coordinates of height, width and length unite. In a room, this would be the corner. Vogt's work begins at this node. However, for the undertaking of Vogt's sculptures, the corner can take on the appearance of a ledge, wall, mountain, or monument. Vogt refers to *GRAYAREA* as an architectural intervention that creates corners within the structure from which we can visually turn to enter or exit the volumetric shafts of light. There is an idea that involves explaining painting as what is put in and photography is as what is left out. This is a simple (or complex) equation of addition or subtraction. Vogt's concentration on the establishment of light within the space also bring into focus what is outside of the frame: the sidewalk, buildings and streets receding in perspective, as well as the sky, sun, moon, and ultimately the universe in infinite expanse. All we are left with is a precise, yet fragmented representation of the unification of these points of reference. Vogt crops his sculptures with a similar thinking to a photographer's eye while establishing a method of building that edits in constant reference to what we do not see. This is another example of Vogt's ability to complete two divergent views into one cohesive assembly. Vogt has mastered a method of creating addition through the use of subtraction. ●

ANDY VOGT grew up in the suburbs of Washington DC, the son of a compulsive dumpster diving filmmaker and an environmental policy maker. He earned his BFA from Carnegie Mellon University with a concentration in Intermedia, a program focused on time based media, performance and installation. After moving to San Francisco during the height of the 'dotcom boom' (2000) he was sculpturally inspired by the wave of detritus produced by fervent home renovation. The hundreds of debris boxes that populated city streets were overflowing with remnants of Victorian era construction material nearly a century old. In the face of San Francisco's residential, commercial (and cultural) exfoliation at the time, he found inspiration for new structural forms scraped together from this subcutaneous supporting material headed for the landfill.

KELSEY NICHOLSON is an artist, curator at Southern Exposure and faculty member at California College of the Arts. She also serves as co-founder of AttaBoyStudios, a project based think tank. When not on official business, Nicholson works at expanding her pack of three dogs to as many as her family will allow.

# 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.

