

Framing the Many Possibilities of Photography in the Tech Age

Art Reviews

By CLAUDINE ISE
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

The so-called reinvention of photography has been in full swing for a number of years now, and yet the "hows" and "whys" and "what nows" of this task are still open-ended questions. Tucked away in a small storefront in downtown Hollywood (just one door down from Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions), the Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies is at the heart of these debates. Offering a glimpse into the current state of the photographic arts is the center's annual juried group show, curated by board co-president Glenn Kaino and featuring 13 L.A.-based members of the center.

As is typical of this kind of show, overarching themes and manifestoes are absent. This will frustrate some viewers and relieve others. What the uniformly strong works do make clear is that artists working with photography and photo-based media are embracing a wide range of approaches that do not necessarily include photography per se.

You can't see the photograph in **Craig Johnston's** ingenious installation, but you can hear it. Using a computer, Johnston has translated a photograph into a bitmap image and a digital audio file, then pressed the resulting rumbling sounds onto a vinyl record. Similarly, **Brian Moss's** fragmentary newspaper tracings leave conspicuously blank the sections where photographic illustrations would normally appear.

Highlighting the fragmented and fabricated nature of history and memory are **Todd Weaver's** self-consciously stagy stereoscopic photographs, **Shaune Thyne's** ghostly and intransigent portrait of downtown legend Don Jones, and **Nicholas Fedak II's** spliced-up archival Codalith transparencies.

Kip Fulbeck's autobiographical

video shrines to his Chinese grandmother explore the generational push and pull that creates—and complicates—ethnic and cultural identity. With equal parts irony and goofy good cheer, **Young Chung** dramatizes his own cultural dislocation by fetishizing a model Korean Airlines jet (along with a motherly flight attendant).

Karin Geiger's large color photographs of female high-school students and **Liza Hennessey Botkin's** black-and-white images of women standing in grocery lines or changing diapers honor routinely forgotten moments, while the brightly painted water valves documented in **Nancy D. Nisbet's** "Somewhere in Irvine" series infuse decorative excess into a deadpan tradition made famous by Lewis Baltz and others.

Insisting upon the singularity of tragedy, **Louis Cameron** takes a postage stamp-sized photograph of a missing African American youth and enlarges it to hundreds of times its original size. The large, mirror-like surfaces of **S.E. Barnett's** high-gloss C-prints of Barbie and G.I. Joe clothing invite viewers' uneasy identification, while **Mike McMillin's** digital prints of a leopard, "captured" from what appears to be a TV or computer screen, remind us that photographic images expand and limit our view of the world in roughly equal proportions.

● *Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies, 6518 Hollywood Blvd., (323) 466-6232, through March 13. Closed Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays.*