

Press Release for exhibition

For Immediate Release: September 14, 2001

Euphrat Museum of Art

De Anza College
Cupertino, CA 95014

Memory and History of Place

October 2 - November 21, 2001
Closed Veterans Day weekend

Hours: Tu, W, Th, 11-4; Tu evening 6-8, Sat 11-2. Open to tour groups by appointment.

Reception: Tuesday, October 30, 6-8 pm

Artists: Enrique Andrade, Libby Black, Mario Lemos, Janet Leong Malan, Carol A. Marschner, Maria Park, Peter Tonningsen, David Yamamoto, Jean Yi.

Memory and History of Place is an exhibition about "a sense of place." It ranges from documentary photography to public monuments, paintings to installations. A sense of place is part of a person's emotional life and also part of a healthy community, because people who connect with their historical or physical environment are more likely to connect with civic and political life. *Memory and History of Place* includes local history and attention to what came before Silicon Valley, important to an area with many newcomers and rapid change.

The exhibition concept began with **David Yamamoto**, whose photography reflects his subjective experience of historic events. Yamamoto lives in Los Angeles, where he has photographed the sites damaged during the Watts riots and how they have changed. One sees how Los Angeles develops and grows. He juxtaposes these images with images of Manzanar, taken over fifty years after its use as an internment camp for Japanese Americans during WWII. The ruins of Manzanar will soon disappear, as it is now part of the National Park system. Yamamoto ponders, "It will be strange — a driving tour through an internment camp as a vacation destination." Yamamoto has a personal interest in these histories. His father, Japanese American, was five years old when he was in Manzanar; he thought it was the "camp" that other children enjoy in summers. His mother, African American, lived in Los Angeles at the time of the riots but had no connection to Watts. Yamamoto is a doctoral candidate in visual anthropology.

The ceramic installation created by **Janet Leong Malan** relates less to major historic events and more to her family's contribution to the Valley of Heart's Delight, as Silicon Valley was once called. Her father, Marshall Mok Leong, was a pioneer in Silicon Valley's

tradition of Chinese flower growers which continued strong into the 1980s. Leong immigrated to the U.S. in 1939 from southern China, and created a small empire out of five acres of farmland he purchased in Cupertino in the 1950s. The family lived in Cupertino, for a long time one of the few Asian families in the city. They owned land at the crossings of Highway 85 and De Anza Blvd, and ran plant, fruit, and flower businesses. "We were surrounded by orchards and horse stables." For this installation, *Conversations in the Garden*, Leong Malan created plots of ground with quotations of memories, along with flower urns and other objects symbolic of the valley's former horticultural renown. "Our front yard is now Highway 85."

Carol A. Marschner loves to paint and loves the history of Santa Clara Valley, Silicon Valley, as well. She sketches continually and later in the studio brings the sketches to life with paint and pastel. The artworks, often wildly colorful, evoke memories from old timers and new timers too, because the valley changes so rapidly. The Olson's cherry and apricot orchards. The orchard at Homestead and Lawrence, where now a giant hospital is under construction. The orchard off 237 (it was a toxic waste site). The Ferry Morse Seed Company. Cali Brothers, located at what is now Cupertino's City Center. The Wright house, from the 1850s. Old Page Mill Road. Maryknoll, once a large monastery, now a site for expensive homes and open-space area for fitness buffs. And, of course, the wild mustard.

Maria Park, born in Germany, currently living in the South Bay, moved around a lot when she was growing up: Europe, the Middle East, the U.S., Korea. She was "always a visitor." She never felt as if she belonged to a country, but did feel her "Asianness" when living for a spell in the Midwest. "Construct your own narrative," she says about her artwork, but the artwork is also specific to her life. "My paintings are my history, ideals, where I can identify, as opposed to any physical space." Park's paintings have invented landscapes with little apparent geographical connection. The figures, like astronauts or deep-sea divers, are avatars, seemingly untethered. They are travelers as in *Nomadic Pilgrimage* with its horses from *Canterbury Tales*. Planes, "overcoming struggle," fly over stylized waves, mountains, and small areas in flames. "The explosions are little ideas, breaking common ideology, the categorization of people."

Jean Yi lives in San Jose but thinks often of her roots in Korea. She has traveled back to Korea to visit the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea, which has great significance for her family. Her father traversed the area years ago and it remains an area that divides their family. Yi exhibits postcards created from overhead photographs of the demilitarized zone and combines the political reality with personal remembrances. "At the border town of Panmunjam in the Demilitarized Zone, I looked through mounted binoculars into the brushy landscape and wondered where my father had crossed into the South a half century ago."

Peter Tonningsen, who grew up in Alameda in the East Bay, revisits the Alameda Naval Air Station, a site of a youthful fascination, now a place in transition, in the process of

redevelopment by the City of Alameda. His photographs encompass many aspects: barracks, U.S.S. Hornet, air depot. They document the passing of an era and recognize the work that went on there. "When I returned to my hometown in 1997 the vibrant community of this mysterious facility now stood vacant... I began wandering around the Base, searching out an understanding of what had been so coveted. What I discovered was an odd mix of evidence of the verve that accumulated there in its 57 years of operation; remnants of humanity, symbols of military indoctrination, and affirmation of the massive scale and bureaucratic system of such an institution." Tonninsen is interested in how public sites interact with personal identity. He explores collective memory, preserves the legacy of a place, and draws attention to the conveyance of military property to the public, which involves many issues one hopes are resolved in a manner favorable to our future and respectful to our past.

Libby Black's memories of place are personal, but at the same time they can resonate with people in far off places. She has created seven miniature houses, duplicates of those in which she lived as a child. Her family was upper middle class. These reconstructed houses offer commentaries on how she fit in. She made them "rough, messy, with glue, fingerprints, not perfect — like me." Black's installation also features dozens of shoeboxes. Her mother always had them around. The different brand names had importance. Black's artwork comments on memory of place as an embodiment of values. Her reflection on life style and materialism have particular relevance at this time in this valley where there has been such disparity in income and where many people have seen rapid and incredible increases in income and buying power, followed by a rapid decline.

Enrique Andrade and **Mario Lemos** constructed an artwork on a map, making a "map" of their relationship. They bought the map from a homeless man in San Francisco. They felt that neither of them had homes, in a sense. The project covered the time of Andrade's first year living in San Francisco. The sixteen one-foot-square panels on plywood were divided randomly (they flipped coins). They worked on their squares separately then put them together. The paintings with mixed media include portraits and double portraits, allusions to restaurants where they ate and places they went, and many symbolic elements with general and personal meanings. For example gold triangles may refer to the Transamerica Building, the golden hills of California, and immigration to California for a better life, which offered the possibility of leading a life of art and exploration.

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Call Jan Rindfleisch 408-864-8836 for more information.