

Art Meeting Science on its Turf

On the walls of the notable Michael Graves-designed Kavli Institute of Theoretical Physics at UCSB, art finds an unexpected home

BY JOSEF WOODARD
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

Finding where the art's at in Santa Barbara isn't generally a challenge. Word is dispersed via the usual sources of listings, marketing and word of mouth (and word of mouse), not to mention the consolidating force of the monthly "First Thursday" art crawls. Even so, there is a distinct and special pleasure in ferreting out the exhibitions and spaces less-traveled, and in happening upon a worthy, off-the-radar show.

At the moment, one of the choicest local exhibitions less traveled is hanging on the walls upstairs in UCSB's Kavli Institute of Theoretical Physics. "SciArt2011," a gathering of six artists dealing in some way with the intersection of art and science, is, in fact, a show of dual appeal. The art is one thing, and an impressive thing. The space itself is another: here we have a ripe excuse to visit the unique interior of the building that famed postmodernist architect Michael Graves made.

Said building, opened for business back in 2002 with some deserved fanfare, is a warm and slightly idiosyncratic structure, connected to the campus but literally a large stone's throw away from the oceanfront cliff across the street. By comparison, KITP is smaller, quirkier and more personal in scale and feeling than the spate of other, vaster and not always friendly buildings that have gone up on campus, particularly in this corner of the property.

Inside Graves' building, the intrigue continues, through a design that feels at once retro and fresh, filtered through a '90s aesthetic. Warm-toned



Courtesy photo

'DRAWING-POEMS,' JEAN-PIERRE HÉBERT



WILDLING ART MUSEUM

Through September 11, 2011
Wed-Sun • 11 am-5 pm

SCENIC VIEW AHEAD

Cover Art from the Auto Club's
Westways Collection

Organized by the Wildling Art Museum
in cooperation with the Automobile Club
of Southern California.

Detail: Merv Corning, Jeffrey Fine, High Sierra, July 1968
Automobile Club of Southern California Archives

Visit our Gift Shop and other Exhibitions
July 6 Through August 14:
Then & Now: Photography of Tom Millea

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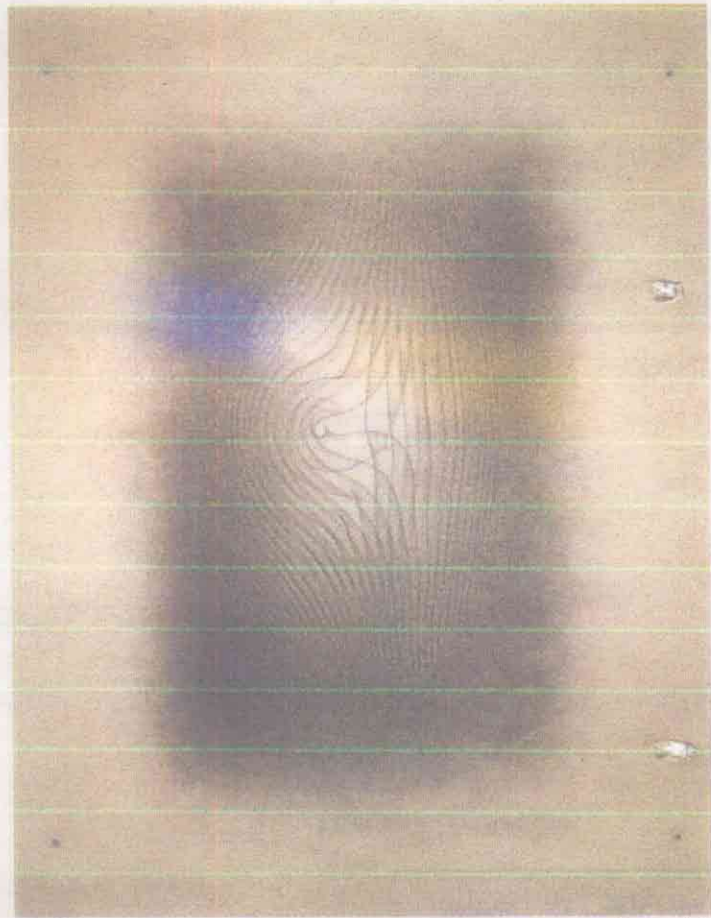
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Inside Graves' building, the intrigue continues, through a design that feels at once retro and fresh, filtered through a '90s aesthetic. Warm-toned walls and a stylish, view-outfitted upstairs library, in the rounded tower end of the building, makes for an em-

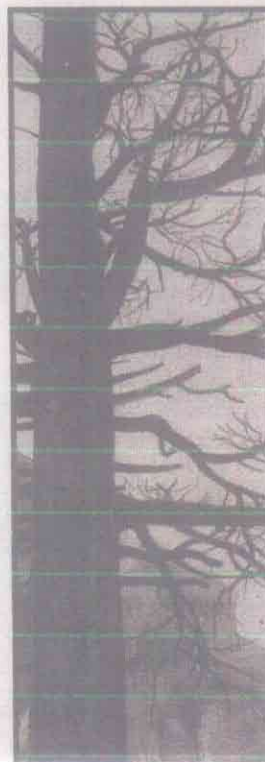


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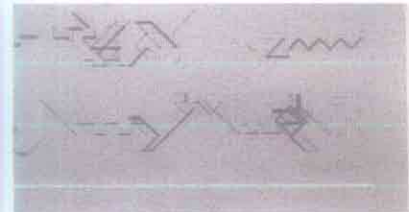
July 6 Through August 14:

Then & Now: Photography of Tom Millea

August 17 through September 11:

Earth Friendly Art

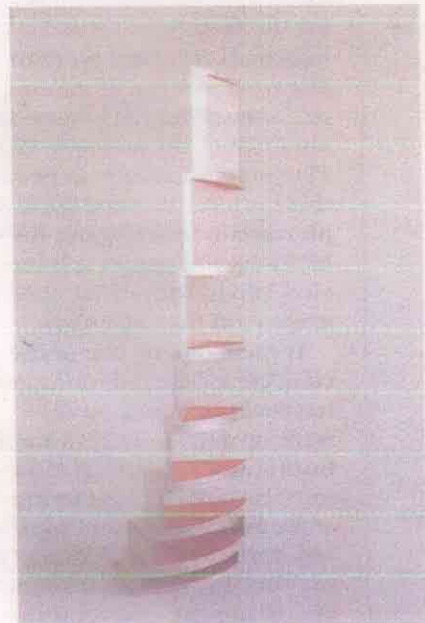
6000 San Marcos Ave., Los Olivos



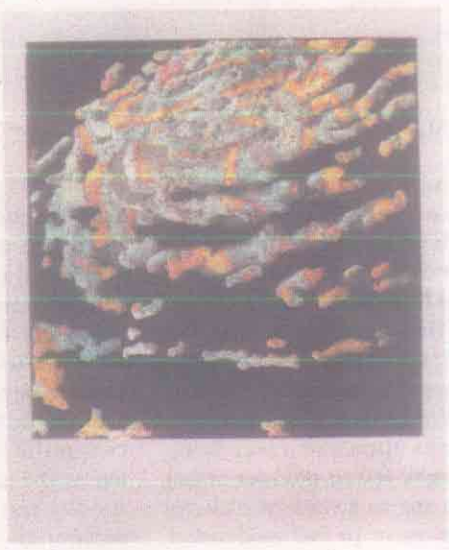
Courtesy photos



KAY WIESE



'GEOMETRY-POEMS,' BIRGIT FAUSTMANN



'PHOTO-POEMS,' VICTOR RAPHAEL

SCIART

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bracing and inspiring pinnacle to the experience of the building.

Not surprisingly, this science-inflected art show is set in a happy, compatible home. Taking its curatorial cue from physicist/artist Bern Porter, and his early '70s "SciArt manifesto," the KITP show also spins off the Fluxus-esque idea of artworks as "art-poems" of various stripes. Each artist here — from Alejandro Casazi's "gesture-poems" to Kay Wiese's "bio-poems" — adheres to the cura-

torial theme while pursuing disparate ideas and processes.

Santa Barbara art-watchers are familiar with the work of Jean-Pierre Hebert, the KITP artist-in-residence who deftly combines Zen meditative notions and custom software-driven drawing systems. He was featured in a fondly remembered Contemporary Arts Forum show two years ago, and in the here and now his "drawing-poems" make for a logical fulcrum, from which the other artists extend.

Most directly, Casazi's "algorithmic free hand gesture-poem" drawings contrast Hebert's tactics, by use of intricate freehand drawings (seen here as drawings and etchings), which marshal cumulative strokes and gestures into textural patterns. These can suggest wild grasses or magnified hair particles, but generally burrow into a niche of microcos-

mic visuals.

Victor Raphael's hand-painted "photo-poems" meld the relatively antique, endangered medium of painting with Polaroid prints. Onto these imperiled prints the artist imposes

iridescent hand-painting manipulations to alternately evoke the realms of molecular dimensions, wave action and astrophysics.

Manfred Mohr moves in an entirely different direction with

his computer-generated, algorithmically considered "math-poems." In his particular artistic world, hard-edged geometric lines and shapes intersect with fragmented blocks of flat color.

Up in the idyllic library space at KITP, Birgit Faustmann bursts into three-dimensionality. Well, more precisely, she eases into the sculptural realm, with cool-headed wooden "geometry-poems" set into a vitrine and as relief sculptures on the wall

(between windows with ocean views to live for). She deals with spiraling forms, small and peculiarly enchanting sculptures with steeped layers and twining formality. Across the room, her pyramid-shaped constructions, with large circular hunks plucked out, offer a responsive doppelganger void effect to the materiality of her other artworks in the room.

Back in the rounded alcove of the library, Wiese's link to science is more direct. She turns modeling of RNA replication into so-called "bio-poems," on prints and on a computer monitor with rotating imagery. Beyond its connections to activity at the molecular level — molecular realism — she relates to the environment on more purely visual and artistic terms. The looping, curving forms play well with the host space, specifically the rounded tower and witty circular motifs in Graves' design here.

Suffice to say, in "SciArt2011," the art is in the right place, and the place itself is well worth paying attention to, as well.

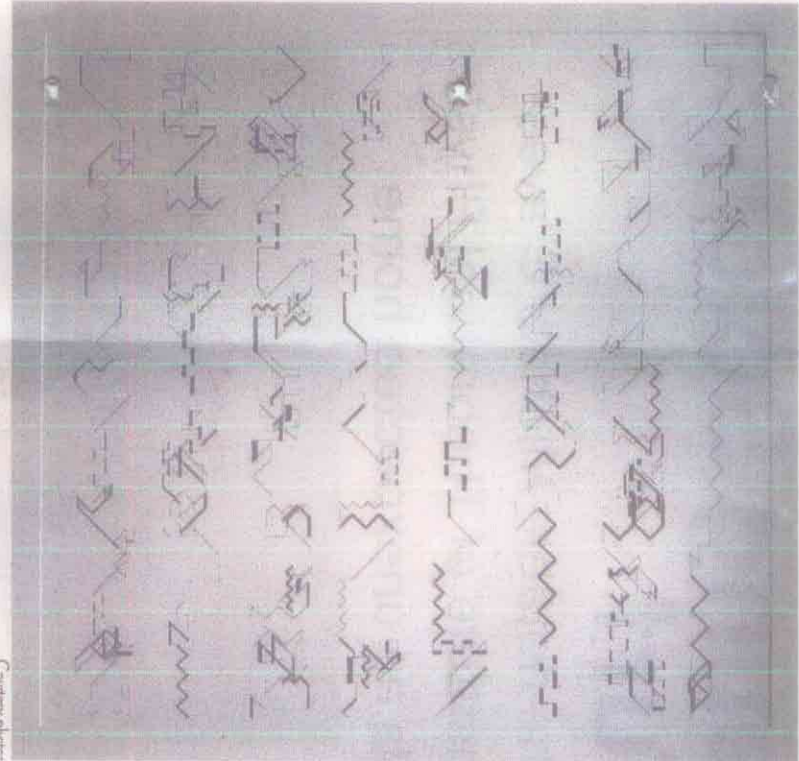
ART REVIEW

'SCIART2011 AT THE KITP'

When: through Nov. 4
Where: Kavli Institute of Theoretical Physics, UCSB
Gallery hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday

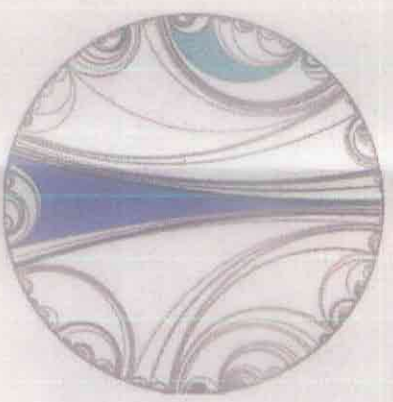


RESS



'MATH-POEMS,' MANFRED MOHR

Country pictures



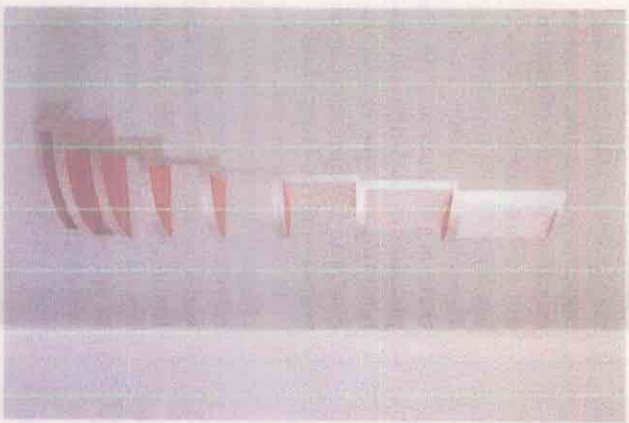
'BIO-POEMS,' KAY WIESE

THE ABCs OF DINING:
AMAZING FOOD
BEAUTIFUL VIEWS
COMFORTABLE PRICES

SCIART
 Continued from page 47
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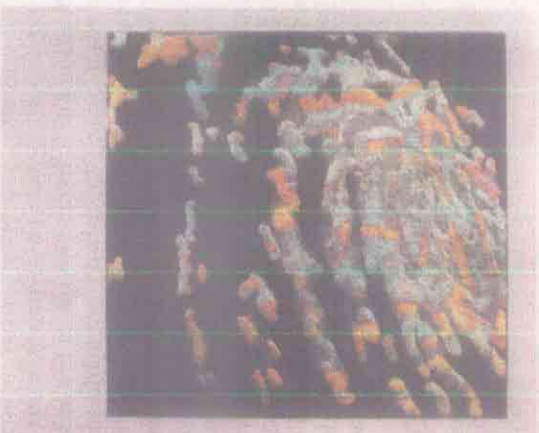


'GESTURE-POEMS,' ALEJANDRO CASAZI



'GEOMETRY-POEMS,' BIRGIT FAUSTMANN

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