

**Sayre Gomez** wants viewers to watch their step and pay attention: he thickly spreads wood chips on the gallery floor to evoke a park, and contrasts this faux-outdoor space with two walls of monochromatic paintings depicting a shopping center showroom. Small speakers disguised as rocks play hip-hop and pop selections from Mark Zuckerberg's public Spotify playlist, while banners affixed to the wall are solemnly peopled with random words and phrases generated from an online algorithm. The effect of the cacophony of music, nonsense slogans, and consumerist themes is that of a constant barrage to the senses. In contrast to all this are the large, mostly serene paintings, rendered in veils of purple and blue paint. In one an empty picnic table is visible, in others isolated trees are silhouetted. Nature and solitude are the obvious counterparts to frenetic and discordant modern life, but Gomez hints at something more sinister and lonely. In one painting, gloved fingers open a window, and a sculpture of a faceless figure on a park bench is mute and melancholy. The result is the uneasy sensation that modernity is filled with perils, whether one is immersed in society or solitude (Francois Ghebaly, Downtown).

Kristen Osborne-Barucca

**Mercedes Helnwein, Kim Kimbro and Vonn Sumner** each showcase a new series of works presented as three solo shows, but sharing a haunting quality that ultimately makes them cohere as a group. Sumner's surreal and dark humor is particularly intoxicating. All of his realistic paintings feature figures placed in a vacant context; all feel solemn because of the mundane palette and rigid posture. It's the bizarre juxtapositions of a reddish orange 'cap' that is pulled over the model's eyes, or the older man who is suspended in the air that is reminiscent of Giorgio de Chirico. His classic metaphysical period works played with similarly dark undertones and dreamlike references.

Kimbro's imagery begins where an eerie fairy tale ends. Bears, deer and a white wolf are just a few of the animals that are featured, all bathed in soft fields of color. The painterly texture does not function expressively however, and as



Sayre Gomez, "I'm Different," 2014, installation, currently on view at Francois Ghebaly.

a consequence the compositions feel empty. By contrast, the expressionistic drawings by Helnwein depict young women in a variety of poses that make them feel unfortunate and soulless. The dated look of their clothing distances them from the viewer, but the care in the handling displays an affinity by the artist for her subject. Similar to Bay Area Figurationists like Nathan Oliveira, these figures mix somber and violent movements (Merry Karnowsky, *Miracle Mile*).

G. James Daichendt

Entering into the space of **Penelope Umbrico's** current exhibition titled "Mountains, Moving: Light Leaks, and Chemical Burns," feels a bit like entering the realm of a private obsessive. The subject on display is the repeatedly photographed image of Mount Moran, taken from a variety of vantage points, the results of which are hung at a consistent height along the gallery walls. With little breathing room between them, the hanging of the



Vonn Sumner, "Sock Hat (Japan)," 2014, oil on panel, 20 x 16", is currently on view at Merry Karnowsky.

show creates a slightly claustrophobic environment. The character of the individual works is of less importance than the overall impression created by the repeated image.

*Virtual* may be the key word here. The images were not photographed on-site in Wyoming, but rather rephotographed with an iPhone from books such as “Aperture’s Masters of Photography,” or from images called up on a computer screen (both ways at least one step removed from their “original” state). These appropriations do not approach the territory of Sherrie Levine, for the point is not to recreate the source facsimiles of the mountain but to fundamentally change it. Umbrico digitally processes everything through any of over 500 camera app filters the artist downloaded to her phone. With these apps’ names ranging from the nostalgic to conceptual to “artsy” to just plain silly — Kodachrome, 70s, X-Tech, Daido Moriyama, Antique, Halftone and Cyborg to name a few — she manipulates, distorts, burns, colorizes, and texturizes pretty much everything. More than an investigation of a singular image, Umbrico investigates the process itself, from analog to digital, on a quest to discover the evolution of perception in the age of digital reproduction (Mark Moore Gallery, Culver City).

Molly Enholt

Even in Pasadena, the home of Cal Tech and JPL, it’s uncommon to discover Isaac Newton’s name on the list of contributors to an art exhibition. But there it is, along with a supporting cast that includes the Curiosity Rover and Dawn Spacecraft. Newton’s writings and astronomical engravings from the early 1800’s interact with imagery captured by NASA/JPL’s orbiting Dawn spacecraft and a 1925 silent film, “The Wonder of Creation.” Stephen Nowlin illuminates the permeable border between art and science with an edifying essay. It includes a quote by William de Kooning that sets the stage for the exhibition. “The idea of space is given to the artist to change if he can.” All of the above energize a variety of intriguing responses from eight artists chosen to participate in **“Realspace.”** Dan Goods and David Delgado’s “Refraction” floods walls



Dan Goods and David Delgado, “Refraction,” 2014, theater light, water, custom electronics, 19 x 25 ft., dimensions variable, is currently on view at Art Center.

with moving cascades of light. Jennifer Steinkamp creates an absorbing digital projection of asteroids moving through space, stimulated by Stephen Hawkin’s theories of the origin of life throughout the universe. Adam W. Brown and Robert Root-Bernstein’s installation sends sparks through an experimental lab. Rebeca Mendez’ video enlivens her investigation of the migration of Arctic Terns. Santiago V. Lombeyda’s “Expressive Maps” are derived from DNA, while James Griffith creates a stunning series of drawings entitled “Natural Selection” with tar from the La Brea Tar Pits. Prepare to be amazed by this provocative examination of an interaction of artistic achievement with scientific investigation (Art Center College of Design, Alyce de Roulet Williamson Gallery, Pasadena).

DC

**“Ed Moses: Cross Sections”** is a stunning show, not a retrospective but still a knowing selection that highlights what Moses has produced from 1970 to the present. Three separate galleries are divided into types of techniques and processes he uses: straight grids, diagonal grids, curvilinear or squiggle-like grids, atmospheric use of light, stain paintings, shaped canvasses, monochromatic color, layering, resins, and other experimental works on canvas, wood panel or Rhoplex (a plastic sheeting that reflects the painted surface onto the wall behind). Moses created