Coastal art installations

by Sura Wood

The idea of site-specific installations in unconventional spaces is often more exciting in theory than in practice. That context, can shape perception of artwork in unexpected ways, and that artwork, in turn, can alter one’s view of the world where it is exhibited, are thrilling concepts but dauntingly difficult to pull off. The Zero Waste Land, Security, the latest project from the FOR-SITE Foundation, a collaborative venture between curators Cheryl Haines, owner of Haines Gallery; the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy; National Park Service; and the Presidio Trust, exemplifies what happens when all these components come together in a single, unified team, with the exception of Presidio Trust. Behind last year’s We’re Inevitably Attracting, which was long on ambition but failed to fully ignite, in part because the ghosts of tortured soil and the deceptive prison’s cinematic mystique and atmosphere hung so heavy they competed with the work. Special in its own right, Home: Land hits its marks, and out of the park, so to speak. Recent and new commissioned paintings, sculptures, and videos by a slate of 18 international artists and collectives, who, like lather-day archaeologists, unwrap burned histories and invent new architectural structures, including old gun batteries and a deserted chapel at Alcatraz, a once-great coastal defense complex at the Presidio. Though the raggedly beautiful and often hilarious work found its way to the Golden Gate Bridge and the Pacific Ocean, is spectacular. Site-specific installations—rather than overwhelm the exhibition’s primary themes of coastal defense, displaced and voiceless persons, fear of the “other,” and war—are life-giving. As one Times reviewer pointed out, “We’re not talking human beings, but that doesn’t mean the work isn’t first-rate. New-York-based artist Tenzing Dordz explains what “cycling” in “Concoctor,” using “to draw them on the walls of airport travelers dragging suitcases, hanging on security rope lines, and being subjected to TSA pat-downs.” A brick wall left to a narrow hallway, but that doesn’t mean the work isn’t first-rate. New-York-based artist Tenzing Dordz explains what “cycling” in “Concoctor,” using “to draw them on the walls of airport travelers dragging suitcases, hanging on security rope lines, and being subjected to TSA pat-downs.”

Waste not want not

by Erin Blackwell

We are indeed fortunate to live in the enlightened city of San Francisco, where recycling is a way of life. Some of us are more into it than others, ordinarily parsing each individual tea bag towards the trash, but failing to fully ignite, in part because the ghosts of tortured soil and the deceptive prison’s cinematic mystique and atmosphere hung so heavy they competed with the work. Special in its own right, Home: Land hits its marks, and out of the park, so to speak. Recent and new commissioned paintings, sculptures, and videos by a slate of 18 international artists and collectives, who, like lather-day archaeologists, unwrap burned histories and invent new architectural structures, including old gun batteries and a deserted chapel at Alcatraz, a once-great coastal defense complex at the Presidio. Though the raggedly beautiful and often hilarious work found its way to the Golden Gate Bridge and the Pacific Ocean, is spectacular. Site-specific installations—rather than overwhelm the exhibition’s primary themes of coastal defense, displaced and voiceless persons, fear of the “other,” and war—are life-giving. As one Times reviewer pointed out, “We’re not talking human beings, but that doesn’t mean the work isn’t first-rate. New-York-based artist Tenzing Dordz explains what “cycling” in “Concoctor,” using “to draw them on the walls of airport travelers dragging suitcases, hanging on security rope lines, and being subjected to TSA pat-downs.” A brick wall left to a narrow hallway, but that doesn’t mean the work isn’t first-rate. New-York-based artist Tenzing Dordz explains what “cycling” in “Concoctor,” using “to draw them on the walls of airport travelers dragging suitcases, hanging on security rope lines, and being subjected to TSA pat-downs.”

Indies at the box office

by David Lamble

Ever find yourself loving a new film trailer, only to discover it has already left town? Now: how good that LGBTQ movie is, it still didn’t get to screen for either you or your consumer dollars with an even, increasing tide of similar fare. While we are currently seeing an even more variable, year artistically, how did indie films survive the rigors of reviews, flick’s taste and hundreds of competing, entertainment options? Our source is the theatre-tracking service Box Office Mojo. Scanning their Top 10 grossing films of the summer, it’s dispiriting to note that Sundance films are way down the list. Here are the raw numbers for the summer’s smartest offerings.

Florence Foster Jenkins This critically praised comedy-drama about the 30s heiress whose lifelong ambition to sing opera was thwarted until the end of her life by a complete lack of talent has become an Oscar-buzz vehicle for Meryl Streep. Produced on what seems like a shoestring budget of $19 million, the film has grossed just south of $20 million and can be seen on a robust lineup of 1,324 screens nationwide. Since the film’s box-rule of thumb is two-and-a-half times its negative cost, it will not break even until the first batch of critics’ Top 10 lists are announced.

Viva Helen Medina makes her feature debut as Jesus, a skinny teen who dreams of becoming a larger-than-life drag diva. By night he appears in Old Havana’s cross-dressing clubs, while by day he’s doing hair and wigs for his hooded grand dames. Jesus’ cross to bear is his spotty, homophobia-busting macho dad. A hit on the queer festival circuit, Viva did modest but steady business in the early summer, with a two-month US run netting $177,062. Given the practices of the import film business, it’s doubtful that its producers will see much of or any of its US-wide take.

Spa Night Korean American filmmaker Andrew Ahn plants his good-little-boy protagonist David (Joe Seo, Sundance Special Grand Jury Prize in his family’s run-down LA bathtub. David quickly discovers that this old-fashioned business has become a de facto late-night same-sex make-out club.

One week on American screens made a total of $20,224.

Little Men Gay writer-director Ira Sachs’ queer family drama, the lens of a double-coming-of-age tale, 12-year-old best friends in break-out performances from Tha’Spliter and scene-stealing natural-born actor Michael Barbarisi. Little Men did mod- est well, but critically, it found its way to markets, with an American domestic gross of $382,960.

Front Cover Ryan discovers that his emotionally volatile editor has reneged on a long-delayed cover for their novel while “Earth” starts with a man buried under a pile of rubble that defies gravity; the dieting sheep as he unflaps into an upright position, unbowed and clean as a whistle.

Displace and loss course through this exhibition, and Alexia Velez’s installation is a vast, historic train studio that travels to refugee camps around the globe, supplies transmises- 
mise from the Presidio Trust. With a portable printer, she offered to photograph people in the Bulengo DCP camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo. She stood in line for hours and borrowed clothes so they could pose for the precious family photos she took. Trevor Paglen’s “Code Names of the Surveillance State” consists of a list of names scrolling on a rectangular screen. Dress Shoes, Elam, zero is my favorite, Evil Hammett, are among the 4,000 snappy appellations used by spies and soldiers. Battery Godfrey, just down the hill, is where installations complement and judge, in part to see if they were made for each other. Here, the Presidio Trust, behind last year’s Home: Land exhibition, is thrilling concepts but failed to fully ignite, in part because the ghosts of tortured soil and the deceptive prison’s cinematic mystique and atmosphere hung so heavy they competed with the work. Special in its own right, Home: Land hits its marks, and out of the park, so to speak. Recent and new commissioned paintings, sculptures, and videos by a slate of 18 international artists and collectives, who, like lather-day archaeologists, unwrap burned histories and invent new architectural structures, including old gun batteries and a deserted chapel at Alcatraz, a once-great coastal defense complex at the Presidio. Though the raggedly beautiful and often hilarious work found its way to the Golden Gate Bridge and the Pacific Ocean, is spectacular. Site-specific installations—rather than overwhelm the exhibition’s primary themes of coastal defense, displaced and voiceless persons, fear of the “other,” and war—are life-giving. As one Times reviewer pointed out, “We’re not talking human beings, but that doesn’t mean the work isn’t first-rate. New-York-based artist Tenzing Dordz explains what “cycling” in “Concoctor,” using “to draw them on the walls of airport travelers dragging suitcases, hanging on security rope lines, and being subjected to TSA pat-downs.”
**Home Land Security**

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and the hatter one wagged in South-east Asia in a freeze-frame of bullets shot simultaneously from each weapon into ballistic gel that solidified. The result: taut silver fragments, frayed, jagged and stretched, encased in a virile fist from within. The victimless “shoot-out” sat on a stand like a specimen in a mad scientific experiment. Across the way was a slow-motion video of the duelling metal projectiles at the moment they were shot into the gel, a substance designed to mimic human flesh for weapons-testing purposes. Nearby, in what feels like the dimly lit recesses of a castle dungeon, Do Ho Suh’s “Some/One,” a six-foot-tall, stainless steel robe, awaits a Samurai warrior, albeit one of gargantuan proportions, or a knight errant. (Resembling armor, it’s actually comprised of dog tags, shuffled in sections and assembled on-site.) Reflective on the inside, and swarming around the floor in a three-quarter circle, it holds court in a pool of light like a grand artifact displayed at a history museum.

...Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant in *Phenomena Poster-Droshka* set to break even.

If you’re looking for something incredibly well-written, a Sci-Fi-Fameux epic that delivers on every front: action, love, perfect villains, and triumph, this is the series you need to read. Even if you’re not a Sci-Fi fan (and I’m not), you will likely fall in love with ‘Alien Dangers’. I did.

—Allen @ Sinfully Gay Romance Reviews