

tive art serving to better put the metaphor within reach (Soka University, Founders Gallery, Orange County).

Roberta Carasso

“Popol Vuh: Watercolor Paintings of **Diego Rivera**” is tucked away in a corner of this large multi-cultural museum. The 17 small, primitively drawn watercolors, all from 1931, are likely to enchant and even mystify, due in part to the legend that inspired these artworks. Popol Vuh is the sacred text of the ancient Quiché Maya people from Guatemala and Mexico. The text, as translated by American author John Weatherwax (from an 18th century Mayan to Spanish translation), describes the creation of the world. Rivera’s watercolors are highly stylized, referencing imagery decorating Mayan ceramic, stone and painted artifacts. Beneath every painting, there is a detailed excerpt from a Weatherwax text. The artist then, inspired by the author’s words including, “The flood and the destruction of the wooden man,” “Monkeys that look like people,” and other metaphorical references to humanity’s beginnings. Nearly naked, brown skinned characters, bedecked with primitive necklaces, bracelets and earrings, alternately pay homages to gods, monsters and dragon-like creatures. While these small paintings lack the detail and majesty of his murals, the stylized characters are inspired by those in his larger works (Bowers Museum, Orange County).

Liz Goldner

“**City Life, Los Angeles: 1930s to 1950s**” features primarily watercolors with a few oils, by Lee Blair, Phil Dike, John Haley, Elmer Plummer, Retta Scott, Edouard Vysekal and several others. It illustrates the



Natasha Shoro, “Metamorphosis,” 2015, acrylic on canvas, is currently on view at Soka University.

rapid development of Los Angeles when it was undergoing modernization and the population was growing quickly. Emil Kosa Jr.’s “Wilshire at Night” (1959) depicts a Westwood restaurant with space age architecture features, lighted windows, cars and obscure images of people, all against the dark backdrop. The artist’s “Past Glory” (1952), of the run-down Beth Israel Synagogue in the Bunker Hill district, has a similar look. Also from this district is Noel Quinn’s “Three Sisters, Bunker Hill, L.A.” (1945) composition of three majestic homes. Contrasting with these is Dan Luntz’ bucolic “Bunker Hill” (1942) mansions dominated by mature trees. Millard Sheets’ lush “Olvera Street” (1951) captures a colorful, busy downtown street filled with people and flower vendors.

Several paintings of L.A. tunnels include Ralph Hulett’s “Out of the Tunnel” (1950), detailing the entrance to the Hill Street tunnel, and Dorothy Sklar’s “The Tunnel” (1947), depicting a red streetcar emerging from a tunnel. Of particular interest is Sheets’ “Beer for Prosperity” (1933). This close-up of a glass-fronted bar/coffee shop was named for the anti-prohibition slogan of that time. Barse Miller’s “Lincoln Park” (1935) is notable for its detailed carousel and soda fountain. A number of historic photographs also help to set the scene of the Los Angeles of nearly a century ago (Laguna Art Museum, Orange County).

LG



Diego Rivera, “Human Sacrifice and Self-Sacrifice before the God Tohil,” 1931, watercolor on paper, is currently on view at the Bowers Museum.

Korean artist **Do Ho Suh** creates architectural installations, sculptures and works on paper that draw on themes of home, identity, space, memory and most poignantly, migra-

tion. When Suh decided to re-create his New York City apartment, he looked to using a transparent polyester fabric, steel wire rods, and the old-school technique of frottage to create architectural drawings which serve as patterns. He wrapped his real-life apartment's walls with paper, then carefully used blue crayon/chalk to rub across all surfaces top to bottom. This process establishes an intimate connection between home and the memory of home. The installation is built around the inclusion of the immense transparent drawings of each wall/room, to which the artist adds all its finer details, such as light switches, heat regulators, pipes and other fixtures. We easily move through these life-sized, see-through, multi-colored structures even as we observe all spaces at once.

In another gallery with black-painted walls are a series of "Specimens," large light boxes that each house an appliance: refrigerator, bathtub, stove and toilet. The colored transparency of these common appliances transforms them into objects of beauty. Among a series of drawings made of multi-colored threads that the artist machine stitches and applies to hand-made paper, "My Homes" portrays a rough-hewn outline of a man composed of black thread. Above his head spin two circles of houses. Finally, a video mixed media animation titled "Secret Garden" depicts a replica of his childhood home in Korea, which has been transported by truck across the world to its new home at Madison Square Garden in New York City. It is a body of work that interrogates the meaning of home, identity and personal space in the content of globalization, filled with implications about the evolving meanings of no longer quite



Do Ho Suh, "Apartment A, Unit 2, Corridor and Staircase, 348 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011, USA," 2011-2014, Polyester fabric and stainless steel tubes, Apartment A, 271 2/3 x 169 3/10 x 96 7/16"; Unit 2, 422 7/16 x 228 1/3 x 96 1/16"; Corridor and Staircase, 488 3/16 x 66 1/8 x 96 7/16", is currently on view at MoCA San Diego.

Installation view, The Contemporary Austin – Jones Center, Austin, 2014. Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong. Photograph by Brian Fitzsimmons.

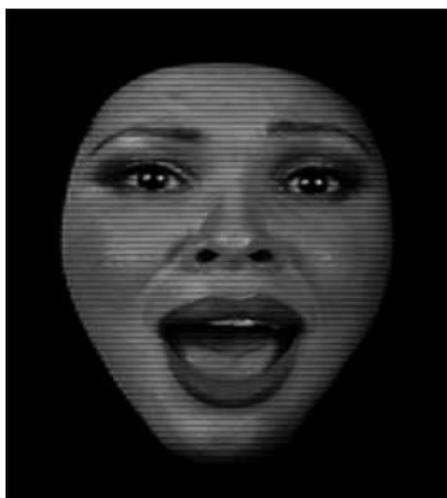
so familiar cultural structures. Experiencing this work makes us wonder how we maintain stability and who are we in relationship to what used to be a primary anchor — our home (Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego).

Cathy Breslaw

Please DO Touch is the credo of "**Sweet Gongs Vibrating**," a multimedia, multi-sensory group exhibition curated by Amanda Cachia, San Diego Art Institute's current Curator-in-Residence. This exhibition is as much about Cachia's passion to "combat the ocularcentrism in our gallery and museum system" as it is to present interesting art by twenty local, national and international artists who happen to use multiple modes of expression in their works. Their broad intent is to alter our perception of art — to shift us from regarding it from a solely visual standard, to consider art as inclusive of all the senses. We are thus actively invited to create sounds using mallets to strike Aaron McPeake's "Vibrating Gongs" (2007-2010), or by simply picking up McPeake's "Singing Bowls" (2011). Cooper Baker's "Giant Spectrum" (2016) activates lights by sound. Spinning wheels made of wood produce various clicking sounds from plastic straps and rods placed behind the wheels in Aren Skalman's "Wheels" (2015). Margaret Noble's works "A Score for Conversation" (2014) and "Head in



Emil Kosa Jr., "Wilshire at Night, Ships Cafe," 1959, watercolor, is currently on view at the Laguna Art Museum (see page 30).



Stefani Byrd with Amy Alexander, "Diva: ReDux," 2015, still from video, is currently on view at the San Diego Art Institute.

the Sand" (2015) activate sounds and reverberations based on the speed of our touch.

A series of videos further highlight sensorial experiences. Diane Borsato's "Cemetery" (2015) focuses on a woman eating an ice cream cone from start to finish. We hear repetitive licks and slurps, with a background of other environmental noises also in the mix. In the video performance by operatic singer Andrea Green in "Diva: ReDux," Stefani Byrd with Amy Alexander use music and software to express love, sorrow, joy and grief, all clarified and deepened by facial expressions and color. Throughout this show, the visual teams with auditory, tactile and olfactory sensations to enhance art's capacity to expand our connection to both personal emotion and the world around us (San Diego Art Institute, San Diego).

CB

What impact do wildlife and human beings have on California's native habitat? What happens when housing developments invade the state's dwindling open lands? **Luke Matjas** considers these questions and more in his colorful, witty exhibition of large-scale digital prints, analog drawings, banners, paintings and signs. Golden poppies, acting as place markers, are among the flora that repeatedly appear in this native Californian's work. Suburban life intertwines with nature as green PVC watering hoses pair with dia-

mondback snakes in "Rare is the Mammal Which Disputes the Right of Way with a Diamondback." Although people are absent from the work Matjas presents here, their presence is noted in a rash of mundane objects of the type typically featured in Home Depot ads. Plastic chairs hang from uprooted oak trees. Coolers take on the role of lost ships of the desert. Photographs, sketchbooks and newspaper articles that inspire Matjas and explain his process are housed in a vitrine near the entrance to the exhibition. Among these is an article that reported the demise of a tagged mountain lion P-32, killed on the Golden State Freeway last year; it's right up the artist's alley (Carnegie Art Museum, Ventura County).

DC



Luke Matjas, "Rare is the Mammal Which Disputes the Right of Way with a Diamondback (Caduceus)," 2015, digital/analog drawing, archival print, 120 x 42", is currently on view at the Carnegie Museum.