

AROUND THE GALLERIES

Inspired by the Santa Ana winds

If one ideal for that often attempted but rarely perfected curatorial form known as the group show is that it amounts, in some sense, to more than the sum of its parts, "**Red Wind**" at Blum & Poe achieves that through the cultivation not of a coherent theme so much as an atmospheric climate: a visual tone comparable to the peculiar sensory and psychological effects of the famed Santa Ana winds, aptly summarized by the show's organizers as "a collective visceral sense of foreboding."

The show begins with a vaguely menacing installation of wind chimes by **Mungo Thomson**, all black in color and dead still in the draft-less gallery. A low, steady buzz issues from an antique-looking generator in the opposite corner, as if amplifying vibrations from the bowels of the Earth, in a piece by **Peter Coffin**. A photograph by **Mark Wyse** depicts a rock face stained with traces of red.

In several works, this earthy disquiet takes a gothic turn. **Jedediah Caesar's** ominously titled series "0,000,000" consists of numerous table-sized resin

disks studded with bits of plaster, dirt and other semi-organic detritus, suggesting fragments of geological extraction or some kind of post-apocalyptic patio furniture. **Christina Lei Rodriguez's** "White Fly I, White Fly II," an installation of small ficus trees coated in melted plastic, epoxy, foam, paint, tinsel, metal studs, rhinestones and chain mesh, might have come from the same "Dune"-like fantasy.

Two dynamic sculptures by **Liz Lerner** embody the spontaneous violence that the Santa Anas are said to inspire. The first, "high-strength," is an explosion of aluminum tubes, steel and cables, about the size of a very large tumbleweed; the other, "Plash," is a cast pewter fist that appears to be slamming into a puddle of water on the flat surface of a pedestal.

The show's one burst of light comes with **Coffin's** enchanting "Untitled (Rainbow)": a collection of 30 photographs arranged in such a way that the rainbows streaking the sky in each form a smooth, contiguous spiral pattern while the corners of the prints skew at all angles — a magical balance of chaos and cohesion.

Works by **Anya Gallaccio,**

Thomas Helbig, Jennifer Nicon, Markus Selg, Anna Sew Hoy and Katja Strunz round out the selection in a mostly complementary manner, sustaining the mood without particularly standing out.

The show's title comes from the Raymond Chandler story of the same name, as does its epigraph, a famous passage extolling "those hot dry Santa Anas that come down through the mountain passes and curl your hair and make your nerves jump and your skin itch." It's a feeling most Southern Californians know well, persuasively embodied here.

Blum & Poe, 2754 La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, (310) 836-2062, through Aug. 23. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.blumandpoe.com.