

Manifold 'Sensations' From Earth to Moon

Yerba Buena show covers a lot of ground

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts shows things made with artistic intent alongside things that might be mistaken for art if nothing were known about their intent. This practice fits a time when anything at all may turn up under the rubric of art.

"Multiple Sensations," which opens today, fulfills the center's curious mission as well as any set of exhibitions it has presented to date.

Birth and death, sex, drugs, distraction and destruction, the moon and the stars (of stage and screen) all figure in, loosely strung on the theme of collections.

"Starstruck" arrays hundreds of items of celebrity memorabilia from the archives of Gary Lee Boas, who has been buttonholing notables since 1966.

Look at a few of his yellowing snapshots, and they seem like the outcome of lucky chance encounters. Everyone from Ursula Andress to Frank Zappa is here. Look at a hundred, 200, and the famous and almost-famous alike start to seem like letters in some vast crossword puzzle — a sprawling Hollywood Squares of Boas' imagining.

A completely different spirit animates Julian Rosefeldt's "Global Soap" (2000) and Piero Steinle's "Ekstase" (2000). But then, Rosefeldt and Steinle are Europeans and much younger than Boas.

Rosefeldt watched countless hours of soap opera from around the world and culled brief clips, summed up in giant stills, that show how a narrow lexicon of gestures, shots and facial expressions pervades the genre, no matter the language of the dialogue.

In "Ekstase" Steinle has made a parallel study of video pornography.

Anyone who responded to the films in Bruce Conner's recent retrospective will marvel at Rosefeldt and Steinle's use of found footage in their collaborative piece "Detonation Deutschland" (1996).

On seven screens enveloping a room, they project carefully edited documentary footage of old buildings in Germany being dynamited to make way for new. One does not have to watch for long to see and hear in this rumbling progress the civilian equivalent of war.

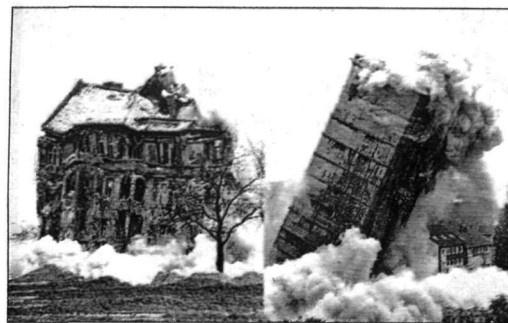
Counterpoint to "Detonation Deutschland" is Michael Light's "Drift, 29 days and 18 hours" (1999). A silent, single-screen black-and-white video, it reprises the photographs taken of the moon by orbiting American astronauts that formed last year's exhibition "Full Moon" at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Watching the stills run together on video is a little like looking at a flip-book of moon shots. It makes the climax of NASA's engineering from only 30 years ago look startlingly antique.

Another quiet passage in "Multiple Sensations" is Michael Wenyon and Susan Gamble's "Bibliomania," a corridor lined with softly glowing holograms.

Along one wall are the spines of books chosen from the venerable Boston Atheneum, including Rudolf Arnheim's "Art and Visual Perception," "Art Criticism From a Laboratory," "Wonders of the Invisible World" and "Books for Tired Eyes."

The opposite wall displays holograms of old card catalog drawers. The holograms give the books and



Scenes from "Detonation Deutschland" by Julian Rosefeldt and Piero Steinle, part of "Multiple Sensations" at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

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