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ART PAPERS

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sound strive to elevate the relationship of sound perception and association to a more conscious, deliberate level.

Adriana Arenas' *Sweet Illusion* projects a dual channel video diptych of a cotton candy machine in operation. The highly saturated pinks of the cotton candy contrast with the Crayola greens of the mountainside vegetation and the greys of the village lying below to form a dream-styled landscape which intensifies the distance between a sullyng civilization and the pristine naiveté of the videos' focal point in which the candy is created. This journey into magical realism is accompanied by Tejano love ballads and a video monitor giving simultaneous English translations of the direct, lovesome lyrics. The phallic nature of the dipping stick and the ever swelling mass of candy around it point to the sexuality underscoring the piece, although without inducing any negative (read sleazy) connotations.

The fact that Rueben Lorch-Miller's untitled sculpture is easily overlooked upon first encounter intensifies its irony when fully realized. Two translucent white plastic rectangular objects, a few feet in length, hang from the ceiling at the expected fluorescent-light level. Because of the blurring of sounds from the show's other pieces, you have to stand directly beneath the objects to notice theirs: they emit, of course, a low-level hum. As the ears adjust to "tune in" this sound, the listener becomes aware of the fact that the hum pauses to take a breath. The animated, inanimate objects breathe, sing, cough and clear their throat. Laced with harmonics, the fluorescent lights' voice develops into something particularly extraordinary. Through sensitive recording and layering, Lorch-Miller transforms a background annoyance into an endearing example of a machine struggling to take on human charac-

teristics. Lorch-Miller successfully reworks the quotidian into something surprisingly beautiful.

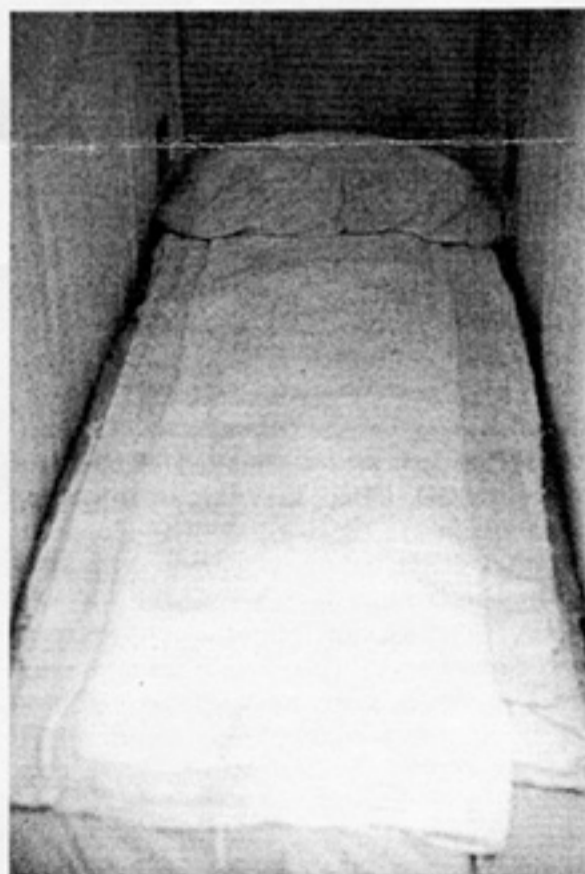
Upon stepping into the all-white padded room of Sheri Simons' *Inert Raga*, the listener immediately is cut off from the activity of the rest of the show (and everything else) and invited to listen to speakers strategically placed throughout. By the low-hanging swing in a corner, the sounds of another environment's humming becomes audible. If you lay in the white bed, tucked away in the all-white alcove, you can hear two differing channels: to the right, someone walking; to the left, a boat being rowed through calm water. A small monitor on the ceiling displays television shows with the vertical and horizontal holds out of alignment. The audience become witness to everyplace that they are not. *Inert Raga* imposes a considerable distance between perceiver and perceived, creating a liberty from any responsibility to react. Nina Katchadourian's *Surface Spoils* offers an interesting contrast to *Inert Raga*, offering the listener an excerpt of the musical cultures of Europe. Katchadourian has pieced together segments of found audio cassette tape from 10 European cities, restored them to the best possible condition, and presented them to the listener in CD form. The surprising result is that the samples mirror what one would expect to find if we looked in our own streets: Prague offers us a taste of trash metal; Stockholm bad Brit-pop, etc. The languages may be different, but the connectedness of the represented cultures and tastes underscores a collective Western sonic consciousness.

The works in "Aural Sex" successfully interact with each other to demonstrate the many ways that sound shapes our perception of daily life. From the hum of a light, to the ridiculous music used to back porn, we are constantly surrounded by interesting sounds that more times than not go under-appreciated, or worse unrecognized.

David Harrison Horton and Kristin Miltner  
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## SAN FRANCISCO

That sound influences how people visualize their environment goes without saying. The noises of buses, cabs, airplanes, etc. all contribute to our understanding of what it means to live in a city, while crickets and the cackle of chickens mean something quite other. While most sounds are associated subconsciously, **AURAL SEX** (Catharine Clark Gallery, August 31—October 7) organizer Catharine Clark and curator Marcia Tanner have assembled together seven artists whose differing approaches to



Sheri Simons, *Inert Raga*, 2000, mixed media installation, dimensions variable (photo courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery).