

## Cruising down the highway of art with “CA-101 2013”

The AES Power Plant in Redondo Beach is surging with energy. “CA-101,” an all-media art show that filled up hallways and rooms at the Palos Verdes Inn, is back for an encore performance, this time in a venue that has already proved itself to be something of a secular cathedral for art enthusiasts.

Once again, also, Nina Zak Laddon and her cohorts, including exhibitions director Sandra Liljenwall, have lured an assortment of artists (117 of them, from 35 southern California cities), with about half of them from outside the area. New faces, and old friends.

The exhibition, which opens tomorrow (Friday), received some 600 submission, with 190 of them going on view.

“What I learned from the exhibition last year,” Zak Laddon says, “is that there is a way to connect different media and different styles of work in a way that creates interest and harmony. So, (with) traditional painting, abstract painting, contemporary installation, people working with ceramics or wood – if you make your juried selection carefully you have a chance of putting (together) a very interesting show.

“We ended up with about 50 abstract works, 50 more traditional works, 50 mixed media works, and 50 3-D installation (works). And the criteria was, is the work good? I did not mind if it was a well established famous artist that showed in museum galleries or an artist who just left art school. If they work fitted into the exhibition we accepted it.

“The other thing that I learned from the last show,” Zak Laddon continues, “is that big works speak and small works – especially in a space like the Power Plant – disappeared and don’t get their due respect.”

### Shaping the experience

“Ask me a question,” says Denis Richardson. “What have I learned?”

Okay, what have you learned?

Richardson constructed 650 feet of gallery walls in order to display the work.

“I was involved in the first art show (with the Redondo Beach Art Group) at the Power House, what was also called the Redondo Beach Steam Station,” he says, wowing us with such esoteric knowledge. “I spent a lot of hours there. It was fun coming back to do this again, seven years later. I think what I’ve learned is how the crowd might circulate through the artwork. We build walls, and sometimes these walls become like mazes and they cut people off from whatever social aspect there might be from looking at art.”

Richardson then describes how some of the space inside the “industrial cathedral” has been partitioned. “But I think the most amazing view is when you come in, and you can look down an aisle of 300 feet to the distant wall,” where an impressive artwork will in turn be looking back 300 feet at us. “I don’t know if any other museum has a viewpoint like this, and maybe there’ll be too many people to appreciate that, but at some point that distant view is an amazing complement to the space of the building.”

Maybe a statue of an archer at one end, carefully taking aim, and the statue of a young girl on the other, with an apple on her head? Hey, I’m just trying to help!

“I do stained glass windows, which is architectural art,” Richardson continues, which makes me think he’d like to have a go at the tall windows next time instead of



Abyss, Adrian Amjadi

the walls. The space is so cavernous that, with all this work, “it’s like four different art galleries.”

### Sober, tranquil... and fun

“I’ve made two installations for the show,” says artist Flora Kao.

“It’s the first thing you see when you come into the space,” adds Richardson, referring to “Ghost Grove.” “It’s unexpected, a nice surprise. It’s in an area in the gallery that we haven’t really utilized for art before.”

“Ghost Grove,” which references Chinese landscape painting, “consists of ten translucent floating panels of white chiffon, each painted with a unique leafless black tree,” Kao has written. “I seek to entice the viewer to walk among the panels and to enter a gauzy cloud of line,

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Denis Richardson, Nina Zak Laddon, Flora Kao, and Sandra Liljenwall

## Cruising down the highway

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shadow, and soft touch. Fluttering and shifting with viewers' movements, 'Ghost Grove' registers the flux of air and people, offering a moment of ghostly beauty in a vast space of human engineering."

"It's beautiful, it's tranquil, and it's fun," says Liljenwall.

"A good contrast to the industrial-heavy turbines and machines," Zak Laddon points out; "and even if you don't hear the noises in the machine you assume it's there, and then you come into this really quiet, airy little space."

Kao's second instillation, she says, "is actually a rubbing of a home that has been demolished, a rubbing of the surface of the home that's left on the wall of the apartment building next door." That's why the work is called "Trace (Palimpsest I)." In other words, it's a life-size oilstick rubbing that required nine panels of fabric and is 16-½ feet high and 45 feet wide.

The house was formerly in Taipei, where Kao's family lives.

"Whenever I go back," she says, "there are less and less single-family homes; they're all being demolished and high rises are being built."

In a written statement about "Trace," Kao says of the work that it "meditates on mortality, memory, displacement and decay. The work documents obsolescence, tracing the visual residue of geopolitics, imperialism, and the onslaught of industrial development."

We'll soon know if it's as wistful an artwork as it sounds.

Flora Kao, of course, is just one of the many, many fascinating artists who'll be showing the fruits of their creative labor at the Power Plant.

"It's going to be the most amazing art exhibition in Redondo Beach history, I have no doubt," says Zak Laddon with a

knowing, confident smile; "you can quote me on that." And indeed I have.

Additionally, there's an event of note set for Friday, June 14, at 4 p.m., and it's a presentation by arts writer Peter Clothier called "One Hour/One Painting." Cost, \$25. Limited to just 25 people, Clothier shares his insight into "giving the eye and the mind the opportunity to learn about pure visual experience and the benefits of contemplation." (310) 720-4943.

*CA 101 – 2013 opens tomorrow (Friday), from 5 to 9 p.m. at the AES Power Plant, 1100 N. Harbor Drive, Redondo Beach. Also Sat, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., Sun, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., as well as next weekend: Fri., June 14, from 5 to 9 p.m., Sat., June 15, from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sun., June 16, from 1 to 7 p.m. ER*