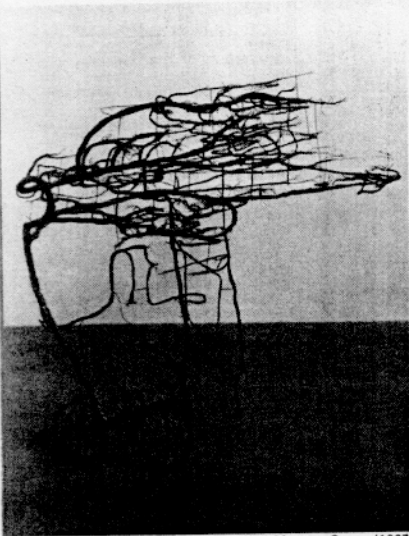


DOUG HARVEY'S (NON-MUSEUM) TOP 10

10. "Whipper Snapper Nerd" at Mark Moore This collection of work by the developmentally disabled artists of San Francisco's Creativity Explored was far and away the best drawing show in L.A. this year. What allowed this work to jump the gap into art-world credibility over equally compelling work produced by L.A.'s own Exceptional Children's Foundation was the embrace of the postmodern media of zines (whence the show got its title) and videos (David Jarvey's *Star Trek: The New One* was the crown jewel of curator Tyler Stalling's "Are We Touched" close-encounters exhibition at Huntington Beach Art Center). The routine art-world defensiveness against the undigestible kick-assness of most Outsider art was, for the time being, short-circuited.

9. Nicole Eisenman at Shoshona Wayne Spiraling free-associative experimental narrative installations are the wave of the future. Nicole Eisenman broke with her established but somewhat restrained cartoon feminist groove to go crazy all over the place, with seemingly off-the-cuff one-liners



Tim Hawkinson, *Organ* (1997)

jostling with messily complex mini-installations that creep up the walls, tear around corners and spill back on the floor like a dizzying, even slightly nauseating but ultimately invigorating theme-park ride.

8. Linda Day at POST Most of what passes for the New Los Angeles Abstraction plays like cartoons from the early '60s making fun of post-WWII N.Y. painting. The trouble is, we've heard the jokes before, and even then they were mean-spirited, puritanical and ignorant. It's a different story in the hands of an actual painter. Linda Day's suite of loopy, gravity-defiant landscapes took the same vocabulary into surprising and sensually extravagant new territory, providing substance to rumors of a contemporary West Coast abstract sensibility.

7. Ed Ruscha at Gagosian While chopless posers once again dance a jig on painting's empty tomb, L.A.'s master of exquisite flatness and dyed-in-the-wool conceptualism repossessed the grid, signage, landscape and spatter painting, with a glam dash of Maxfield Parrish, to produce an intellectually rigorous but emotionally unfettered tour de Los Angeles.

6. Liz Craft, "Living Edge" at Richard Telles Spiraling free-associative experimental narrative... oops. I already used that line. But where Nicole Eisenman is breaking out of an already accepted, but too narrow, artistic persona, Liz Craft is a newcomer proffering her formal and conceptual credentials in a stripped-down, fine-

ly tuned manifesto. Considering the default lameness of the UCLA Cuttin' Edge Kids (TM 1998 Dennis Cooper Enterprises), the sweet strength of this nature/culture vortex was doubly surprising. Rock on.

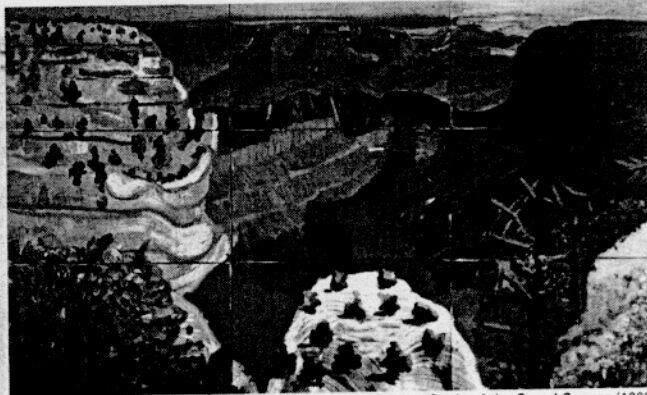
5. Tamara Fites, "Butter-fly Box" at Bamsdall Municipal Gallery Technically part of Catherine Lord's guest curatorial "Trash," but larger and more ambitious than most solo gallery shows, this moving, sentimental, poetic installation was riddled with structural intricacies and painterly formal details. Ms. Fites herein successfully negotiated her own physical absence, the fulcrum around which her previous installation/incarnations as Lamby Kins, Adult Babies, etc., pivoted. With only a short video segment to establish the fictional girl/grandmother psycho-narrative, the tripartite environment's hauntedness served only to amplify the themes of death, transformation and redemption that underlie the giddy hillbilly kitsch that encrusts the surface.

4. Sean Duffy, "teach me to love" at Deepriver Duffy's lurid, fuzzy, shrink-wrap vision of *Star Trek's* Captain Kirk as absent paternal icon embodied a whole slate of critiques on painting's inner and contextual formalities, but in such a funny, exquisite and finely honed way that they became embedded in the novel alternative solutions that communicate them. Eye candy, brain candy, and constructive critical engagement with painting as a living analogue of the contemporary visual environment. What more do you need?

3. Karen Carson at Rosamund Felsen Ditto Ed Ruscha's currency, with the bonus risqué absence of finicky formal skepticism as regards plunging into colorist, compositional, illusionistic spatial and semiological murk without having every last detail worked out beforehand. The backroom-bar-sign Buddhism of her backlit colored plexi stencils outdid even the playful but profound expansion of geometric abstraction in the canvases, which brings the lessons of her Vegas signage period back together with her ongoing argument with tricks of depth and motion.

2. L.A.'s audio art scene A sprawling, multicentered network that infiltrates all levels of the art world, from the thrown-together one-off performances in rented meeting halls to the airwaves of KXLU (and, for one brief shining moment, the missed, busted pirate KBLT), from not-for-profit shambles of Beyond Baroque to the halls of the Geffen Contemporary, the racket continues unabated. Some high points: drone pioneer Tony Conrad performing during MOCA's "Out of Actions"; Caroliner, Solid Eye and the Kids From Widney High at Action Space; the Venomous Invisible Amanda's "radio personality" on KBLT; and the proliferation of experimental sound festivals across the board.

1. Tim Hawkinson at ACE Unfailingly original, entertaining, profound, funny, and intellectually and psychologically engaging, Tim Hawkinson once again overwhelmed us with an embarrassment of mind-boggling art-trash treasures. "The Wall Chart of History From Earliest Times to the Present" and its "Index" (see gatefold of Beck's *Mutations*) and the final room with the Lounge Revival/Mutter Museum exhibit called "Organ" (which stripped a rec-room Hammond to its neurological skeleton), bracketed by the infinitely swooping soundtrack of "Babar" (the automated slide-whistle orchestra) and "Bird" (the triptych of tiny bird sculptures — egg, feather and skeleton constructed from the artist's fingernail and hair clippings), alone packed enough unaffected idiosyncrasy and deep aesthetic pleasure to blow away most gallery exhibits. And there were five more rooms!



David Hockney, *9 Canvas Study of the Grand Canyon* (1998)

MICHAEL DARLING'S (MUSEUM AND GALLERY) TOP 10 PLUS 10

David Hockney at L.A. Louver One of the most dazzling painting shows of recent memory reminds us that as far as contemporary painting goes, Hockney is able to orbit in the same stratosphere as Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke.

Ed Ruscha at Gagosian Plagued as we are with ever shorter cultural memory, it takes a show like this one to remind us that, like Hockney, Ruscha is a giant in our midst.

Tim Hawkinson at ACE Beck put him on his new album cover, but why hasn't anybody else made a fuss over this major local artist?

Charles Ray at MOCA As he slowly does out his profundities year after year, Ray has built a body of work that seems to grow exponentially more complex and meaningful.

Michael Gonzalez at Christopher Grimes Gonzalez has for years honed his craft of cobbling together industrial jetsam to form ultratrimly objects, this time engineering an entire phylum of bubble-bodied organisms out of different-colored plastic bags.

Ero Pop Tokyo at George's This sampling of some of the most bracingly contemporary cultural products seen to date was curated by Japanese artist Takashi

Murakami (who himself had an outstanding show this year at Blum & Poe). Manga for the millennium.

Dave Muller at Blum & Poe In his first true gallery solo show in L.A., the peripatetic impresario of "Three Day Weekend" put together a razor-sharp and disarmingly beautiful show of hand-drawn posters, showing that he can promote his own work as well as he presents others.

Laura Owens at ACME Much hyped but without much to show for it up until now, Owens finally lived up to her billing with a witty, complex and endearing group of paintings that indicate an artist with promise.

Adam Ross at Shoshona Wayne Like Hawkinson, Gonzalez and the artists in *Ero Pop Tokyo*, Ross is an artist with his mind on the Zeitgeist, tapping into the thrills and chills of our technological age. His futuristic landscapes give compelling visual form to prognostications about the urbanism to come.

Very Honorable Mentions for the year include Richard Serra and Robert Gober at MOCA, Andrea Bowers at Santa Monica Museum of Art, Chaim Soutine and Yayoi Kusama at LACMA, Penelope Krebs at Kivo Higashi, Russell Crotty at Dan Bernier, Larry Johnson and Gary Simmons at Margo Leavin, Sam Taylor-Wood at Regen Projects, and John Souza at LACE. □

Sean Duffy, *Kirk eats with Kirk* (1997)

