



Long Beach and Elsewhere, Considered

'CALIFORNIA SCENARIOS' EXPANDS YOUR STATE OF MIND // BY THEO DOUGLAS

EQUAL PARTS COOL POPSICLE, sweaty car ride and inner journey, the Orange County Museum of Art's "California Scenarios" at its Orange

Lounge is a nearly ideal summer show. Informational and thought-provoking without trying too hard, it's a refracted look at destinations—and states of mind—around the state.

From the Winchester Mystery House to the San Diego Zoo to the Salton Sea to Long Beach, it all has that hazy, unfocused, daydream quality that seems to arrive with the heat. Standard disclaimer for those who make the trip: Your Long Beach may vary.

It's hard to say why—not least because art is subjective—but none of the three pieces that try to capture this city really seem to do so. Or maybe that's the point. Or maybe they do.

Bia Gayotto's *Xing LA: From Altadena to Long Beach* perhaps comes closest. A telling of the journey from her house in Altadena to Long Beach—ending in the water, looking north at the Queen Mary and the World Trade Center—it's every bit as lonely and isolating as you'd expect a trip from Altadena to Long Beach might be.

Gayotto sees her piece—comprising simultaneous video clips on three adjacent flat-screen monitors—as a travelogue, and it is. It's also a grim commentary on how transportation doesn't work—and how nobody walks—in Los Angeles.

The scenes shot on foot, in dry river-

beds, somehow make you long for the relative swiftness of a train. The scenes on the train—passengers chock-a-block, reaching inner peace by gazing out the window—make you wish for a car. And the scenes of freeway driving, shot through a car window, only enhance the growing isolation of a one- or two-person vehicle. Nowhere are you happy.

Two audio installations also examine Long Beach. Extreme Situations of Peril (ESOP), a quartet featuring {open}'s shea M gauer, evidently made a movie that was recorded around the state. What you hear here is portions of its audio track according to the exhibit's explanation, blended with "raw audio-visual data."

Big Sur River, campfire gives you something resembling crickets. And *Long Beach, Saturday morning basketball* is all squeaky sneakers, the thud-thud-thud of the ball, and the shouts and laughter of the players.

ESOP's Glenn Bach offers his own installation, *Incidental Music*, a soundtrack of his "daily walking commute" through Long Beach using "words he found along the way, words he could read aloud without stopping or diverging from his path." And yet it's more ambient noise than words, more vision than real hard sound.

Each end result here leaves you wanting more Long Beach. But then, maybe that's as it should be. If one video, one sound installation looked or sounded more like this place, it would be a Chamber of Commerce joint—or else

a retreat of *We Are the World*—and you wouldn't like that.

Jeremy Blake's dreamy *Winchester Redux*, a five-minute video examining the San Jose Winchester mansion, seems more revealing but probably isn't. It's a great respite, watching serenely-hued kaleidoscope shapes of horsemen and chandeliers and window frames bleed into each other. A Mondrian blur of yellow, bisected by a red line, becomes an open upstairs window in the house. Soon, ghostly frames of the house itself—the sprawling, unreasonable Victorian mansion commissioned by fire-



arms widow Sarah Winchester—appear.

It looks great if you've never been there—maybe how works about Long Beach make this city look to folks who don't live here. The Winchester House curator, if there is one, would probably pick this piece apart.