LANDING IN CALIFORNIA

California, like all human geography, is a territory and a concept, a real space and an imaginary site. Established in the sixteenth century by Spanish colonization, maintained by Mexican nationalism, overshot by U.S. expansion, transformed by waves of immigration from the eastern United States as well as Europe, Asia, and Central and South America, California exists in myths of popular culture and the minds ofbeatniks, in its urban arteries, sandy deserts, high mountains, rough coasts, and cultivated fields. To categorize art on the basis of geographical boundary is to presume a national, historical coherence or correspondence between different works of art produced within that boundary. Similarly, to categorize art on the basis of gender presumes some quality or condition shared by a group of artists because of their gender. To think broadly about women artists working in California is to look for correspondences or resonances between their works that might perhaps reveal a new conceptual and historical terrain.

Such is the goal of this essay, to examine metaphorical and metonymic relations that lend (as a concrete medium and as an ideological construct) and the state (as a social system, a political territory, and an economic condition) to the work of women artists working in California. By assuming geographical and, to a lesser extent, gender-specific resonances in the work, it is possible to chart some of the historical and present relations that exist between women and the state, represented by
Land as Metonym

Metonymy is a linguistic term describing the rhetorical expression of association by association: for example, when a soil is used to describe a ship. The part-object or associated object stands for the actual referent. The semantic structure of metonymic phrases also occurs in iconographic forms, in museum displays or exhibitions. For example, when an object stands for the person who owned it, or when a painting represents a particular art movement or historical era. The object represents both itself and a larger concept to which it refers and with which it is materially linked.

In the second half of the twentieth century, landscape itself has been frequently used as a metonym in works of art—particularly in sculpture, conceptual art, and installation art. Fragments of earth, water, and rock have been introduced into exhibition spaces as a way of drawing into a larger geography or territory beyond the confines of the gallery walls. Although the forms of this essay are the result of a recent visit to a group exhibition of works from the 1960s. This comparison, which may seem out of place in a book about women artists, allows an important distinction to emerge concerning the use and the conception of land as a medium and as a social space.

Deir in the House: Walter de Maria and Robert Smithson

In 1968, Walter de Maria exhibited his Land Art Series, a gallery space filled with earth piled into containers high. That same year Robert Smithson produced his first Kinderhook cyclist sculpture, the solid block of earth designed to be moved along the surface of the earth. Smithson’s initial works focused on the idea of the earth as an object in itself, and the earth as an object in and of itself. The earth as a medium for art. In an essay on the work of Walter de Maria and Robert Smithson, the artists’ experimental use of earth as a medium and as an object is discussed in the context of their own regions.

A relatively radical gesture at the time, the work was received in new conceptions of landscape art, yet certain ideas remained unfinished. Land was represented in these works primarily as a formal, aesthetic, or as an eleventh-dimensional object without history. The artists addressed qualities of the land that were more physical than cultural. Meditated through this instrumental lens, the earth became a metaphor for both use and exchange value. With an emphasis on thresholds and thresholds, the artists emphasized the perceptual qualities of an undefined human body and human gaze to the completion of the work, intonationally or emotionally expressing aspects of social specificity, and biography.

--

A similar kind of metonymy marks the work of Niki de Saint-Phalle, who lived in California between 1965 and 1967. The artist is perhaps best known for her multicolored, photo-realistic graphite drawings of the earth as a medium and as a social space. In these drawings, earth, rocks, and the earth as a medium for art. In an essay on the work of Walter de Maria and Robert Smithson, the artists’ experimental use of earth as a medium and as an object is discussed in the context of their own regions.

The earth as a medium for art. In an essay on the work of Walter de Maria and Robert Smithson, the artists’ experimental use of earth as a medium and as an object is discussed in the context of their own regions.

In the second half of the twentieth century, landscape itself has been frequently used as a metonym in works of art—particularly in sculpture, conceptual art, and installation art. Fragments of earth, water, and rock have been introduced into exhibition spaces as a way of drawing into a larger geography or territory beyond the confines of the gallery walls. Although the forms of this essay are the result of a recent visit to a group exhibition of works from the 1960s. This comparison, which may seem out of place in a book about women artists, allows an important distinction to emerge concerning the use and the conception of land as a medium and as a social space.
formal and visual syntax about nature and culture, about production and reproduction. The earth becomes a vessel denoting an ongoing cosmological condition in her work, but close attention to the land, sea, and sky necessarily brings to the attention of her audience the larger whole of which these elements are a part.

Border Topography: Ana de la Riva
Like the work of de la Riva and Smithson, the work of artist Ana de la Riva addresses the formal relations of inside and outside, landscape, topography, and material collection in the space of the gallery. In her installations, done some twenty years later, art an important break from those earlier conceptual and minimilist experiments. For de la Riva, history, geography, and culture becomes central organizing features in her use of land as materials. The land earth into the gallery to reflect upon the relations between immigration and identity, memory and death, which are inextricably tied to her experiences as a Mexican American woman born in California of immigrant parents. While formal elements of de la Riva's work parallel and indistinguishably rely upon works such as Smithson's Sky Site series, they are equally influenced by a cosmological tradition of altar and shrine building in the Chicano/Chicana community in Southern California.

In the Ofrenda (Soborno del Río, 1998), de la Riva pays homage to a spectral river of Hollywood cinema through an ornamental construction that takes the form of an altar. Pleasures of pink confetti adorn ears and frame the space of the altar and gently the figure pictured within. To become a visual narrative about the role of del Río as a central figure in Chicano history and in her own imaginary, de la Riva develops a topographical map of cultural and institutional affiliations grounded in symbolically charged artifacts. Ice, bone, sugar, and cardboard Hollywood photographs are placed opposite childhood playthings, toys, and a Mexican national flag. Two sides of del Río's life—Mexican and American—come together in a contextual device surrounded by a carpet of smoking incense, corn, and firelight. The work reimagines the cultural conditions of meaning across borders, living in the state of California and, at the same time, being a Mexicanized life. The spectral condition of the immigrant who is not seen precisely because she has more than one home, yet is always defined by her relation to place, is here represented by the land she inhabits as well as by the topography of artifacts by which she is identified.

Mona Ruaa addresses the experience of migration more explicitly through her installation...
established brought in. Staged as a domestic tableau, the work includes a large chest of drawers which is revealed as a small private altar and behind which lies a suitcase packed with letters. See, behind each mirror is the dresser drawer and covers the floor around it, as if spilling from a balcony within. The unlikely presence of birds folded into the sections of domestic furniture involves both a burial and reincarnation of dead and dead left behind. It also signals the burial of those who have disappeared in the transition across barrenness. On the wall is inscribed a story told by a young boy, "The story of the bird guide who helped others cross the border. I put me in a sack in the back of a truck with potatoes and told me to be really quiet until I came. It was so hot I couldn't breathe. I cried with no sounds. After hours he came to get me. We had gotten across, but where was my mother? She had given me an address, but I didn't know how to get there and was afraid to ask for help." A child's individual memory in a poignant reminder of familial ties broken by economic hardship. Land becomes a metaphor not only of that which has been left behind, but also of the great distances covered in the process of migration, and the unfamiliar territory newly encountered.

Land as the Condition of Labor

After the Mexican-American War, all native Mexicans were excluded from participation in the California State Senate and in 1852, the California Land Law was passed depicting all Mexican residents of their property. Over one Mexican landowners were forced to give up more than 14 million acres of land. In 1887, the Gold Rush had transformed the state into a destination for immigrants from around the world. The California legislature passed a law in 1888, prohibiting the employment of Chinese in the state, and thus the state was closed to Chinese labor. In 1890, the California legislature addressed an argument against further Chinese immigration to the U.S. Congress, asserting that "the white laborer cannot compete with the Chinese, who needs neither skilled nor unskilled employment, nor factitious clothing, nor education for his children." Admitting that the state supported the illegal removal of Chinese miners from their land claims, the legislature saw in compliance of their subsequent success, once displaced, as less important. In 1902, it became clear that the immigrant workers had little other option than to work in the state's mining industry. The U.S. government undertook Operation Wetback to stem illegal immigration and eject existing workers who were no longer needed. In the process, both Mexicans and Chinese Americans were sometimes indiscriminately rounded up, arrested, divorced, and deported in Mexico; often in violation of their civil rights. Each opportunistic program has characterized California's labor policies in the past and continues to influence the present day under different guises. Given this history, it is not surprising that activists whose work takes place in California as its focus choose to examine the topic critically.

Bryon Lew's “L.A.-Born-Chinese (1986)” is one such critical work addressing the complex history of Chinese immigrants in California, particularly in the city of Los Angeles. In collaboration with stage director Peter Brosius and composer Tom Nouhiv, Bryon Lew's large-scale installation consists of a staged scene that tells a history of Chinese immigration and labor through metaphors of translation and translation. Viewers entered the installation by crossing a wooden bridge that led them to a sandy courtyard. Their journey was led by directional lighting past a sequence of four white tents, reminiscent of those in which Chinese railroad laborers slept. Images of people and places, both historical and contemporary, were projected onto the tents that served as slide screens, allowing several specific histories to emerge, the 1849 Flood in China and the subsequent wave of immigration to the United States; the life of the Chinese railroad workers who lived along the Los Angeles River in the 1880s; the city of Chinatown that took place in downtown Los Angeles, an allegory about the flooding of the Los Angeles River; and the story of Homer Lee, a European American resident of Santa Monica who trained troops for the Chinese revolution. In the center of the installation, a hanging sculpture of Chinese groups played by falling grains of rice provided a subtle accou-
parachute to a recorded musical score that included sounds of nature, speech fragments, and a narrative of historical events. Jan Beall Waterhouse suggests that the work addresses the need to recover and understand suppressed history, commenting, “Regrettably for more than a hundred years, the laborers who built the railroads were given back their own images. Now in the making of today.”

Mary Sue's Delaplagoud (page) addresses the history of agricultural workers, particularly in the orange groves of Southern California. Archival photographs of both Chinese and Mexican Americans were used in the series, giving rise to the idea of the rural labor of European American employers, becoming an artistic means for reimagining and reorienting inter racial labor practices and identities. What is often unacknowledged or unexplored about the history of California's labor is how primarily ethnic differences were affected by class and identity. Although Mexican American, Japanese American, Filipino American, and Chinese American laborers worked side by side and suffered similar forms of social discrimination, low wages, and hard working conditions, workers

associations and workers regularly were organized by ethnic affiliation and were sometimes mutually competitive and antagonistic. As in the case of the railroad laborers, the history of agricultural labor is hidden beneath the surface of the present. The last fifty years in Southern California have seen a dynamic shift from a largely rural based agricultural landscape to a residential sprawl of urban and suburban housing, shopping malls, and freeways. The history of agricultural labor in the southern valleys of the state has been literally paved over by asphalt and cement. Existing "underground," is must be excavated by artists such as Sue to order to be seen by the public at large.

In the Heart of the Sun: Ester Hernandez

If the labor history of Southern California is buried in the dirt, that of more recent labor struggles in Central and Northern California is etched on the walls of the state. In the Valley, the work of many California Chicanas and Chicanos is evident. It is impossible, in fact, to tell the story of Chicanas/Chicanos in California without reference to the labor movements started by Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez, around which the Chicanos civil rights movement coalesced. Yet was considered an integral part of a larger project of social activism and grassroots mobilization to improve the lives of Mexican Americans in the United States. As a result, the years from 1968 to about 1975 wer...
needed to emphasize public art that could reach a large audience, such as murals, posters, and billboards. The work of activist artist Ester Hernández often took the form of prints or silk screens that could be easily reproduced for distribution. Much of her work, including large-scale murals and installations, addressed the state of laboring classes in California as vivid symbols for women's struggles. From her mural portrait of a young girl named Eunice in East Los Angeles (1969), to the abstract painting entitled San Francisco Police Beating Dolores Huerta (1968), the artist used images from representing the daily and heroic struggle of workers, particularly women, to face opposition and discrimination.

One of Hernández’s best-known works, San Mad (1969), has been reproduced on postcards and sold at art venues and museum bookstores throughout the country. A parody of the San Mad brand of cosmetics, the image shows a skeleton dressed in a red banner with swirling dark locks, holding a bottle of makeup labeled “unnaturally grown in naturalia, vitamins, herbicides, fungicides.” Throwing the notion of a normally grown product, the work draws on attention to the real conditions of large-scale agriculture business. In 1969 the artist produced a room-sized installation, bearing the same title as her earlier San Mad screen print, that makes the working conditions of field workers more explicit. In the installation, a tall hanging screen made of vertical panels painted on both sides by artists shown as women’s heads on a table. One side of the panels shows an agricultural worker who is picking grapes, wearing a hat, gloves, and bandana. The other side shows a woman’s face, the camera’s eye visible. On the other side is the image of the San Mad skeleton. Below lies a circle of sand and rocks within which are placed family memorials, including a laborer’s hat, a bandana, a headdress, and a geologist's equipment. Standing on top of the circle are the ashes of a memorial or neologism. Given the health risks agricultural workers face due to exposure to poisonous residues, the latter also serves as a remembrance to those who have died as a result of their labor. Just as in the work of May Sun and Alma Martin, the sand and stones in Hernández’s installation function as a mnemonic for the land upon which so many Californians have labored.

In the work discussed in this section, geographical regions of California provide the context for the exploration of labor history and the relation of women to that history. Even in the case of May Sun’s work, which focuses largely on the labor of Chinese men, the women who supported this labor are not invisible. They form a distinct web of resistance to archival images and narratives. The work of all three artist-teachers arises in a context of second wave and third wave feminism (1970–1990), a period when women’s labor contributions have been increasingly championed by activists and the mainstream. Unlike middle-class feminisms who fought to protect the confines of a domestic life in search of gainful employment, however, women of the peasant classes labored outside the home by necessity. This difference of class, which in California is often conflated with ethnic differences, produced distinct forms of feminist art practice. May Sun and Ester Hernández address the largely invisible history of both men and women who work the land, transforming the economy and shape of California.

Land as Environment

Since the late 1960s, with the rise of environmental activism and the inauguration of Earth Day in 1970, California as a state has paradoxically been at the forefront of environmental reform and home to a record number of environmental activists. Californians have responded to growing concern over the production and design of ways of living, by effectively painting disappearing forests, rivers, and deserts, as a call for action. By reducing their own uses of hazardous materials and, in some cases, by taking the power of representation of the environment into their own hands, artists have also responded by drawing attention to the relation of humans to specific sites, constructed environments, and the “development” of the land.
integrative artist projects to be directed by a woman. Coweeds Community altered the experimental and pedagogical methods of other conceptual and action art of the time. Located below a set of interesting highways. The Farm was set in a row of abandoned buildings transformed by Sherr into an experimental environment for the growth of plants, animals, and time. There were a series of gathering spaces: a farm house, a kitchen; a school without walls, a library, a darkroom, and a healing center. According to the artist, the Farm drew public attention to the availability of a five-acre tract of open land that was subsequently purchased by the city of San Francisco for use as a neighborhood park. As a result, where there was once a barren lot, there now grows a lush green garden, with barns and trees. Concerned as a microcosm of human structures with the natural environment, local economics, city planning, politics, and recreation, the project developed from Sherr's notion of "Life Farm," a conceptual term for what the artist calls "life-scale environmental performance sculpture" designed to heighten the experience or awareness of life itself. In 1980, the artist developed an ongoing project called "The Living Library," that consists of an international, electronically linked network of indoor-outdoor "culture-ecology" parks with accompanying curricular materials for ecological and cross-cultural education. In conjunction with this project, Sherr has created a traveling installation called a Garden of Knowledge, which has been displayed in New York and Houston. By emphasizing the diversity of plant, animal, and cultural life around the globe, the exhibit invites viewers to be more sensitive to their own local flora and fauna, and to consider the intersections between humans and the built environment. Taking a holistic approach, Sherr is a model for other artists who wish to integrate community and environmental activism in an experimental form.

Developing a visual vocabulary for the assessment and critique of land use has been the central focus of artist bệnh Harrison, who, in collaboration with her husband, Robert Harrison, has studied environmental conditions and environmental policies in California and worldwide.
Based at the University of California, San Diego, the team has focused their attention on the ecological and political impact of humans on specific sites or natural systems. Mediations on the Sacramento River, the Delta and the Bay at San Francisco (1977) examined how agricultural lands of California’s Central Valley will eventually evolve and be reduced to a dust bowl as a result of extensive dam building and water diversion. This action explicitly criticizes government and corporate subsidies that perpetuate inefficient, intensive irrigation practices which, at the time, accounted for 83 percent of water usage in the Central Valley. The Harisons have also used radio, posters, and billboards in the city of San Francisco to educate the public about environmental degradation. As with all of their programs, the Sacramento Mediation sought to link the natural condition with human conditions including wholesome ways of resource, state legislation, aggressive consumption practices, and state media advertising.

The Harisons’ latest, most comprehensive project to date in Laguna (1986), a study focusing on food production and waterholes, began in 1975, it continued to grow in complexity and size until 1986, culminating in a 15x15-foot-long mural that focuses on seven different sites. The Soti Laguna (1986) is a study of the Colorado River watershed from the Gulf of California to the Continental Divide. Aerial photographs of sticky, water-soluble structures that resemble the natural environment are accompanied by an almost poetic but describing how the system of dams and human-made waterways is not only damaging to the previously thriving ecosystems in this area, but is also a self-punishing system of lethal reasoning on a general misguided notion of progress.

While the Harisons’ work is largely analytic, some of their more recent projects have included concrete proposals for the reclamation or transformation of specific sites. The Arroyo Seco Release: ASeparator for Pasadena and Devil’s Gate: A Refuge for Pasadena North (1984-89) included a plan to restore the water of the Arroyo Seco River from its artificial course and to reestablish its native woodland vegetation. In 1988, after public debates and media exposure, the city of Pasadena included the Devil’s Gate project in their master plan. The transformation of public policy through artistic practice is precisely what Helin and Newton Harrison desire for their land-based research projects.

Robert Goto and his husband, Tim Collins, were both involved in environmental art practice, at least in part, through an encounter with the social and ecological philosophy of Bessie Shackleton’s Crossroads Community project. Goto, who visited The Farm, became fascinated by the life of the abandoned butterfly and went on to study the unique habitats and diets of various species found in the

Ray Area. His interest developed largely from a powerful memory of butterflies from his childhood in Japan and led him to create several installations that served as gardens for the support of the butterfly life cycle. For his landscape installation in downtown San Francisco’s Yerba Buena Gardens, Butterfly Garden (1990), Goto created, in the artist’s own words, an "urban garden for butterflies, " The project drew attention to the fact that many of the plants that support the butterfly life cycle are considered weeds in traditional gardens. Goto devised a maintenance plan which included only organic techniques. Among all the artists hoped to contribute to a larger ecological
Ample Opportunity: The Community Dialogue

- Reconstructive Art
- Ecosystem Restoration
- Diverse Democracy

Program themes: History, Context, and Public Policy
- Soil, Seed and Habitat
- Sustainable Open Space

Project that might include the development of a wildlife corridor through the city and the state.

Olivia Gato has continued to work on the analysis of local habitat and reconnectivity. In collaboration with Galena she has completed a number of projects that include analyses of waterways, such as the Brooklyn waterfront and a project for the Three Rivers Art Festival in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her work explores the relationships between human development and plant and animal life, bringing that which has been pushed to the margins by human expansion to public attention.

The Nine Mile Run Goddess Project (1992-93), involving Gato, her husband, and two other collaborators, focused on the polluted flood plain area in and around Pittsburgh. An experiment in public dimension, the project provided the opportunity for community members to consider the cultural, historical, and ecological significance of this urban space. As Gato states, "we must define what nature means within the context of our urban communities.

On the Road: Catherine Opie

If anything has changed the look of the California landscape in the last fifty years, it has been the growth of the highway system that, like so many roads and arteries, winds through the hearts of cities and branches across the body of the state. This network of expressways—prominently named “freeways”—became an expansive metonym for escape from the fears of a traditional, geographically rooted life.

Between 1994 and 1995, photographer Catherine Opie produced a series of platinum prints of freeways. Better known for her color saturated and richly detailed portraits, Opie in this series turns to a black and white landscape format, using a large (12 x 18 in.) horizontal negative printed at an enormous 4 x 6 ft. Despite their small size, Opie’s stark and metaphoric images of the freeways’ concrete columns and curved roads express monumental scale. The history of their form marks Auguste Nador’s industrial photography of the early century, as well as the expressions in the work of Eugène Atget. Whether illuminated with electrical towers or the streets of Paris, the documentary impulse of these photographs, which Opie shares, becomes their images within a precise historical moment. When industrial and architectural landscapes are saturated on celluloid spaces, an uneasy quality emerges, a simultaneous tension and anticipation that allow the image to overflow its documentary limits. Opie and these other photographers use time—through the lens of an evanescent moment—as if it were itself a literal element of the image. By eliminating the very traces of traffic and, in some cases, all cars and people from her images of freeways, Opie has created an eerie, almost post-apocalyptic vision of Los Angeles. She comments, “In traveling the freeways, I started to think of them as the structures that would be left behind, that they are Los Angeles’s monuments.” Derived from architectural references, the work anticipates a consumer’s future, as an automobile fantasy of the open, empty road, and installation images the interactions between nature and relocation through human construction where factual, dry structures, and steel-cored high-rises are destroyed by the smooth surfaces, mechanical forms, and emerging lines of asphalt. Lines and steel beams litter the vacant earth beneath concrete, and floodlights brighten the structure of new buildings and tanks at night. Appropriating work and going nowhere in particular, the freeways connect the earth into the air, and descend again into the land. As a documentary photographer, Opie captures a California phenomenon, not because highway construction of this scale is unique to...
the state, but rather because it is emblematic of it. By developing and printing the photographs in such a way as to reference an earlier era of industrial development, Opik chooses a monumental as well as memorial motive for her subject. Whether overcoming the freeway as already anticipated, or supplying that it will be so in the future, Opik’s simultaneously magnetic and mummified sites place this dominant network of roads in critical perspective: the fantasy of the open road is re-framed as a fantasy of the empty road and, perhaps in the future, the road abandoned.

On a more pedestrian scale, Susan Silberman’s long-standing relations between individual biographies and citiescapes, particularly urban streets and plazas, Hot Cross, Market Street Journal (1998), published by the San Francisco Arts Commission, examines the life history of a single boulevard at the heart of the city. Sifting through a sediment of historical maps and archival images that record the life of this busy thoroughfare, the artist juxtaposes stories from the past with those she gathers in the present, creating an experimental guidebook as map for Market Street. Combining archeology with documentary, Silberman interweaves narratives of everyday life with key historical events. Interviews become a central component of the work. The artist states that she “took to the streets with a camera and tape recorder talking with anyone who was in the mood to talk.” She interviewed “important” and “not so important” people including city planners, police officers, architects, historians, and homeless people as well as art critics, anthropologists, Mane donors, office workers, and salon hosts. The book’s remarkable variety of sources and its density of events are enriched by the stories of Michel de Certeau, Karl Marx, Ida Altman, Charles Baudelaire, and other writers who have reflected on city life. Each reference transforms the local focus of the book into a model for reading any boulevard in any metropolis. Using the linear order of Market Street as its guide, the book begins at one end of the boulevard (the site where many immigrants arrived in search of gold in the nineteenth century) and follows personal stories and key cultural sites toward the far end. The Office, The Plaza, The Underground, The Department Store, The Hotel, The Archive, and The Frontier serve as a conceptual and spatial framework for ordering the artist’s progress block by block, chapter by chapter. From a corporate businesswoman who claims he has lived inside every high rise building in the city, to a lifetime conversation between women at the Emporium, to an architect who draws the history of the city at night, to Harvey Milk’s call for the rebuilding of neighborhoods, the stories that appear in the book are stories about living in a particular place and being defined by a unique locale. The power of the project is that it illuminates how any city street might be mined for an equally extensive network of human encounters. Whether the narratives included are about belonging or alienation, development or decay, Silberman’s project reveals the interdependence between biography and geography, subjectivity and environment.

Maya Lin/Sourcebook. Natasha Jeremin

If there is indeed something that can be called "ecological" art, the artworks addressed here insist that the concept of ecology must never be limited to the idea of "nature" narrowly conceived. Ecologies are always heterogeneous, interconnected systems involving a variety of human and non-human actors. Narelle Jeremijenko has explored such social, economic, and material ecologies for several years as an independent artist and as an "engineering officer" at the Bureau of Intrinsic Technologies (BIT), an information agency servicing the Information Age. The projects undertaken by the BIT are presented on the Internet as numbered "products," and generally take the form of what might be called social surveillance. The 1996 Intrinsic Bent, a motion detection system, was installed on the Golden Gate Bridge to capture on-camera any unusual motion in the vicinity of the bridge. In one day’s camera recorded 12 "bridge events," then supplying the public with "specific accurate data of a social phenomenon not previously accurately quantified." By surveilling the Bridge for data with the timing and falling tables of the Don-Jones industrial for each bridge occurrence, the artist also constructs a "depositional index," implying a deeper link between the formal and
The industrial architecture... and the parking lots below. Access to land or property is contingent upon membership, wealth, and specialized knowledge. Into a well-established ecology of surveillance, the Bureau of Invisible Technology introduces a new hybrid species, a new invasive device. B.I.T. scans demonstrates the many ways of the producers while inviting viewers to examine the effects of "information access" that permeates high tech industry.

In addition to her work with the Bureau of Invisible Technology, Jepson has developed a series of investigations into the domain of bioengineering. Her "Wife" project resulted in a series of images narrating the question of genetic determination. One thousand children of a single botanical sample micro-propagated in culture rapidly named "Parody" were displayed at the Teche Bousa Center for the Arts in San Francisco for the European exhibitions in 1999. Each child is to be planted throughout the city of San Francisco, providing the general public in a collaborative collective bodystory. "Because the trees are biologically identical," the artist writes, "to subsequent years they will render the social and environmental differences to which they are exposed." 13 These trees will respond to the microclimates of the city in unique ways, developing over the years in what Jepson calls a "leave... and persistent epiphenomena of the Bay Area's diverse ecosystem."(Olive's experiment with "artificial" life also includes an algorithmic model of the "Parody" tree culture. The growth rate of these cloned individuals, simulated by a carbon dioxide sensor at the aerial root of computer terminals, offers a parallel to the complex growth phenomena occurring throughout the city. Jepson's new ecology of artificial life effectively transforms the environmental health of the region while demonstrating in the public how the urban landscape is in fact a large-scale social, political, and biological laboratory.

Landing in California
Like most of the state's Residents, many of the artists discussed here come from elsewhere. Each has responded to the material conditions of the land or environment discovered during their stay. Formally their work is wide-ranging: from traditional photography and sculpture to contemporary installations and public art. Some have engaged the sites of land as an abstraction, others have changed the way the history of the state is viewed through the critical assessment of labor conditions or the environmental impact of development, and still others have explored the ties between territory and biography. Common to all is an exploration of human relationships to the land and their transformation over time. In my introduction, I suggested that the work examined here might reveal a new conceptual and historical terrain. What the artists have uncovered is the state of California itself—a fragmented earth, its immigration history, its populations, its biographies, its ecological habitats. The new terrain is really an old term rediscovered and reenacted.
WOMEN ARTISTS IN CALIFORNIA AND THEIR ENGAGEMENT WITH PHOTOGRAPHY

California has been rich territory for women who have used photography either as their primary artistic medium, or for those who chose to incorporate photography into a larger artistic schema, such as the production of collage or installation work. Upon reflection, this emphasis on the mechanically reproduced image is hardly surprising, with the Sun industry located in Los Angeles, the cultural understanding of, and aesthetic responses to, its culture of artifice are taught at the neighboring art schools and universities. California Institute of the Arts and the University of California campuses at both San Diego and Los Angeles, San Francisco, on the other hand, was the historical center for a much different tradition, the dedicated application of photography as a form of fine art since the salons. The photographers of the "Oak Group" were inspired by the aesthetics of Cubism, a potent approach to the medium and a desire to make beautiful photographic prints. Through Aheda Adam's long-standing presence—now only as a creative personality, but also as a teacher and active practitioner—so-called "straight photography" still remains a force to be reckoned with. Odama and Mary White started the photography department at the California School of Fine Arts, now the San Francisco Art Institute, and Adam was an important early activist at the San Francisco Museum of Art, now the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Although she received little acknowledgment or credit from her male colleagues until her death, Imogen Cunningham was also a...