



18th street arts center

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CALENDAR / ART

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SHANGRI L.A. (architecture as a state of flux)

February 7 – March 27, 2009

Opening Reception February 7, 2009 6:00 – 10:00pm

Santa Monica, CA – On February 7th, 18th Street launches its 2009 exhibition season with SHANGRI L.A.: *architecture as a state of flux*. Curated by Ichiro Irie for our main gallery, artists include Anibal Catalan, Debbie Hu Ricks and Cedar Miller, Infranatural, Marcos Lutyens, Daniela Frogheri, Fernando Meneses, Oyler Wu Collaborative, James Rojas, and Chris Tallon.

In our project room space, Marcos Novak will present *TURBULENT SHANGRI-L.A.* Mr. Novak is one of our four 2009 California Artist Fellows in residence.

The opening reception for the first of the exhibitions will be held on Saturday, February 7, 2009, from 6:00 to 10:00 pm.

Gallery hours are Monday – Friday 10am-6pm. 18th Street Arts Center is located at 1639 18th Street, Santa Monica. For further information and images please visit our pressroom/gallery at www.18thstreet.org/pressroom.html.

SHANGRI L.A. (architecture as a state of flux)

Shangri-la, as normally spelled, refers to a fictional place in the Far East first described in *Lost Horizon*, a novel by British author James Hilton, and later popularized in a movie by Frank Kapra with the same name. Colloquially, the term Shangri-la has become synonymous with an earthly paradise or utopia, and also with seemingly unattainable dreams or goals, carrying both positive and negative connotations.

The title for the current exhibition, *Shangri L.A.: Architecture as a State of Flux*, takes its cues from these ideas. The fact that the figurative meaning of a Shangri-la was generated from the Los Angeles area (the movie locations were shot in Burbank, Westlake, and Palm Springs, CA) reinforces the idea of how much influence Hollywood movies have on collective consciousness.

Mr. Irie has invited visual artists with some form of architectural training, or artists who spend an unusual amount of time thinking about issues related to architecture and urban development. The works in *Shangri L.A.* approach architecture as something fluid and ephemeral, at times virtual, interactive, recycled and purely cosmetic, building on and dissecting what is already there, exploiting in between spaces, and shifting as needs, values, emotions and desires shift. Instead of trying to rebuild a city from the ground up the exhibition considers transforming the urban landscape as acts of transgression by individuals and small groups, within one's own means, and by any means necessary, not unlike an artist deals with a site specific installation.

The exhibition celebrates architects, and non-architects, who make work that serves as visual/structural enhancers and pressure valves which might one day help Los Angeles, or a city like it, be more fun and less monotonous, more livable and less alienating.

A parallel project, *Turbulent Shangri L.A.*, that will be taking place in the Project Room Gallery will be by our first 2009 Artist Fellow, Marcos Novak. Through the encounter of this theme with the specific character of a particular city, Los Angeles, the project involves a challenge to develop a critical and visionary response rather than a quotidian extrapolation of statistics. Mr. Novak, through an “eversion” technique, will fabricate forms based on viewers’ interactions with virtual and invisible components.

About the Curator

Born in Tokyo and raised in Los Angeles, Ichiro Irie received his B.F.A. from University of California, Santa Barbara and his M.F.A. from Claremont Graduate University. In 2001, Irie went to Mexico City on a Fulbright fellowship, and has maintained an active relationship with the visual art community in Mexico. Irie has exhibited his work internationally in galleries and museums such as Kyubidou Gallery in Tokyo, Museo Carrillo Gil in Mexico City, and CSW Museum in Warsaw. In 2002, Irie founded the RiM magazine, a contemporary art publication that focuses on art produced in Los Angeles and Mexico City, and has recently celebrated the release of its tenth issue as part of an event hosted by 18th Street Arts Center. He is also the founding member Cacahuates Japoneses, an artist collective whose work has been published in magazines such as Art Asia Pacific, Arte Contexto and Arte al Dia.

About 18th Street Arts Center

18th Street annually sets a theme for its exhibitions, which acts as a unifying principle for the curators and artists working with the center. The theme for 2009 is *Almost Utopia: Los Angeles in 2019*. 18th Street Artistic Director Clayton Campbell says “I am asking the curators and artists involved with *Almost Utopia* to look forward a mere ten years with optimism. And, to find the desire to expand our worldview through the art making and ‘outside the box’ ideas of our guest artists. With the election of a new administration we are in a proactive era, yet remain mindful of the challenges in accomplishing reform and improvements in quality of life issues. In a new economic reality and rapidly evolving political and social infrastructure in California, Los Angeles is changing at record speed in ways yet to be fully understood. *Almost Utopia* may provide some clues to the direction already underway.”

18th Street Arts Center programs are generously funded by the City of Santa Monica, the Santa Monica Arts Commission, the National Endowment for the Arts, the James Irvine Foundation, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Getty Foundation.

18th Street Arts Center’s mission is to provoke public dialogue through contemporary art making. 18th Street is a community which values art making as an essential component of a vibrant, just and healthy society.

- END March 27, 2009-