

# Art Notes:

## Jean Lowe and Iana Quesnell

Written by  
Ingrid Hoffmeister

Notes by  
**ANN BERCHTOLD**  
Director of L Street  
Fine Art Gallery

The second exhibition in the San Diego Art Prize series pairs established artist, Jean Lowe with emerging artist Iana Quesnell. The exhibition titled: *Green Acres*, features works by both artists. Both Lowe and Quesnell have a fascination with places that humans occupy. Lowe's concentration is on an impersonal level as it relates to "plunked down communities" which she feels have no aesthetic appeal while Quesnell's interest is from a deeply personal level as she shares specific relationships with the places she inhabits. The visual contrast in their work is strikingly different; Lowe uses a more traditional painterly style while Quesnell works as a draftsman with graphite on paper.

### JEAN LOWE

California-based artist Jean Lowe earned her MFA at the University of California, San Diego in 1988, the same year she presented her first solo exhibition at the Dietrich Jenny Gallery in Downtown San Diego. Lowe earned her BA at the University of

California, Berkeley and was the winner of the first Alberta duPont Bonsal Foundation Art Prize in 2000. "Jean Lowe is about as versatile an artist as you can find and gets her ideas across beautifully and artistically," says Gough W. Thompson Jr., President of the Alberta duPont Bonsal Foundation. "We purchased a work of hers and donated it to the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art as we did for Yvonne Venegas (also a recipient of the San Diego Art Prize)."

For 18 years, Lowe has been inspired and challenged to make work that is visually seductive, viscerally engaging, but also provocative in its critique of how we live in relation to other species and the environment. Lowe enjoys creating artwork that tackles difficult issues such as over-development, exploitation of the environment, sex, power, and the widespread mistreatment of animals.

Notes by  
**DERRICK CARTWRIGHT**  
Executive Director San  
Diego Museum of Art

"Jean Lowe is an artist of unique talent and extraordinary imagination. Whether



confronting a single object or inhabiting a large-scale installation, Lowe's sculptural practice strikes the viewer with its incisive wit and probing social concern. Her intellect embraces an admirably broad spectrum of art historical thinking—from classical statuary, to rococo-inspired interiors, to romantic landscape aesthetics, to post-modern ironical comment. As a museum professional, I have come to look forward to her shrewd interrogations of conspicuous display; as an appreciator of well-conceived ideas, I take delight in her brusque unveiling of

contradictions within our contemporary common culture. Always sly, beautifully wrought (but never precious), her work is a refreshing antidote to the commercialization of fine art, as well as to cynical wisdom. As a person of genuine integrity, humility, and quiet strength, this community should be very proud of having this creative person in our midst. She surely represents the best of San Diego artists to the world beyond our region. For this reason alone, she deserves this recognition. I applaud her achievements.

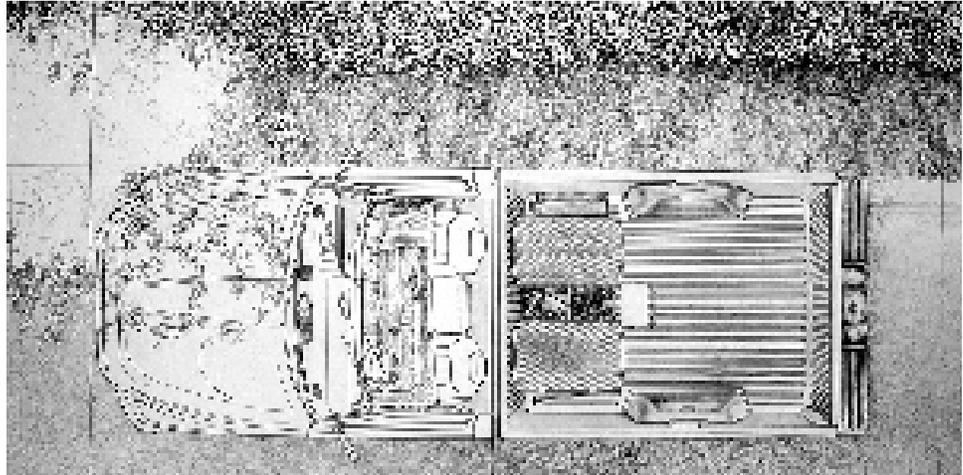
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## IANA QUESNELL

Iana is from the southern states and is currently in the Masters Program at UCSD. Iana's current work is about temporary living situations, specificity of place, as well as, navigation through the spaces she occupies and intends to occupy. *Grab Life by the Horns* is a diagrammatic drawing of the vehicle she lived in for seven months. In addition to how she slept in the space of the cab, it depicts the precise area where she parked and how the existing foliage provided a certain level of privacy."

### Notes by Jean Lowe about IANA

In this selection of meticulously rendered large scale graphite drawings, Iana talks about the built environment through autobiographical compositions based on places she's lived or stayed. Whether that be a military tent in Bosnia, her car, a studio on the border in Tijuana, or the Omni Hotel (for a week for this project), each incorporates architectural floor plans and schematic rendering with more experiential and ephemeral details. I think a viewer is initially pulled in to the work by its beautiful draftsmanship and the surprise of its scale but it's the conceptual underpinnings that seal the deal. She's quite literally drafting her life and this odd combi-



and autobiography yields an unexpected and original narrative.

Notes by  
**AMY ADLER**  
Professor, UCSD

Iana Quesnell engages drawing as a mediating tool between her own body and her immediate surroundings. Often painfully honest these exceptional, large scale drawings take into account her every move with excruciating detail. Iana's work has focused on her personal surroundings. In a very detailed animated film she describes with great accuracy hours worth of cash register transactions at her job at Trader Joe's. This animation, inconceivably constructed from memory describes the repetitive act of checking groceries that would otherwise be considered lost and insignificant gestures.

Iana's work is further informed by her experience

as an enlisted soldier in the US Army. There Iana became a systems analyst. This rigorous discipline and attention to detail has transferred into her work which she now pursues full time as a graduate student in the Visual Arts Department at UCSD. In the past year her projects have included sight specific installations in Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco that engage the venue where the work is

shown. Her well researched approach is equally invasive and reverential. From her delicate renderings of a leaf fallen outside the door to architectural plans to satellite surveillance imagery of the surrounding landscape, Iana's investigations into space both inspect and dissect. Time and space collapse into the disorienting surface of her beguiling drawings.

The San Diego Art Prize  
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L Street Fine Art Gallery / Omni Hotel

Art Notes are written in conjunction with the  
Exhibition: *Green Acres, Works by Jean Lowe and  
Iana Quesnell*

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