

A coast-to-coast photography exchange

CROSS CURRENTS/CROSS COUNTRY - Photographic Resource Center, 602 Commonwealth Ave., and Bank of Boston, 100 Federal St., 36th floor; through Oct. 11.

By Kelly Wise
Special to The Globe

Organized by The Photographic Resource Center and San Francisco Cameraclub, "Cross Currents/Cross Country" presents an exchange exhibition of 26 California photographers and 17 photographers from Massachusetts. Portraits, straight and fictionalized, and landscape and documentary

work comprise a large component of the exhibition. It is gratifying that many of the photographers are relatively unknown and will receive wide exposure through the joint exhibitions here in Boston at the PRC and Bank of Boston and in San Francisco (October 20 through November 19) at the Cameraclub and Eye Galleries.

What may be surprising in its absence and may signify the tenor of the times is the paucity of post-modernist work - appropriations from other media, imagery that depends upon one's interest in deconstructions and reconstituted contexts or the writings of Europe-

an theorists and linguists. Serial imagery and mixed media work make brief appearances. None of the art breaks new frontiers, but much of it is well-conceived and some of it of excellent quality. One of the positive features of the exhibition is its sly and slapdash and sometimes black humor.

The PRC and San Francisco Cameraclub should be congratulated for initiating the exhibition. Photographers in each region submitted work to be selected by a panel of curators, critics and artists. Obviously, there was an effort to exhibit the breadth of work being done in each region.

Shown as a group at the PRC, the art by the Californians is more lively and varied than that shown at the Bank of Boston by the Massachusetts contingent. Ken Botto concocts staged tableaux with dolls and toys that satirize TV consumption and highways

that despoil the landscape with absurd billboards and discarded refuse. Vance Gellert casts his infant son as the innocent victim of intruders, plastic soldiers, and terrifying stories on the evening news. Chris Sullivan stages studio sets in raucous ways. In one image, a takeoff on the adage "the cat's got your tongue," Sullivan juxtaposes a cow's tongue drooping like a flower from a green vase, with a black cat. As if it had just finished dinner, the cat licks its mouth with the tiny machete of its raspberry tongue.

The San Francisco group also creates some fascinating composite work and nude tableaux. Sara Leith's autobiographical pieces combine color and black and white images and project a state of dream and lyrical recollection.

Nina Glaser makes powerful depictions of nude figures against plain backgrounds. These images tend toward the ritualistic as in the photograph of three people, daubed a chalky gray, struggling together to hoist a tattered flag, reminiscent of the famous news

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