LIGHT/DARK: selections from the California Society of Printmakers

It was standing room only last Saturday night at Berkeley Art Center, where art lovers gathered in droves for the opening reception of LIGHT/DARK, an exhibition of 53 prints (by 53 artist members of the California Society of Printmakers) that had been selected by Mexican-born and Bay Area-based master printmaker Enrique Chagoya.

By all measures, it was a strong show and compelling body of artwork featuring local talents — many of whom were in attendance Saturday night.

Artist Beth Fein was there. In fact, in addition to showing Be Trayed (an installation of monotypes, mixed media and monofilaments, 2011) — see photo — she also orchestrated at the outset of the reception, a troupe of nine dancers who welcomed early arriving guests by moving exotically around the paths of Live Oak Park.

"I hadn't planned on dancing," said Fein after the dance performance, "But seeing the performance, I couldn't stop myself from joining in." Dressed in black and white, it was a curious and mesmerizing dance that resulted in the formation of the final piece of the show. It was titled Unspoken, and it came together as each dancer crumpled or folded one of Fein's prints and marched it into the exhibition space, where Fein collected them and carefully placed each at the base of the marquis entrance — creating a kind of pyramid.

Among other artists inside the gallery, Maj-Britt Hilsenroth of El Cerro was there too, present ing her print work, a book-box titled Rivers From A to Z (2003), See page 12.

Ed Roberts Campus ribbon cutting, Saturday

This Saturday at 1 p.m., Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Mayor Tom Bates will be just two of many civic leaders on hand for a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Ed Roberts Campus — the 86,000 square-foot building that some have described as a "functional cathedral."

"It’s amazing to be able to walk down the hall and get the answer to a legal question, or have a document printed in Braille. We can set up conferences and trainings right here in our own facility," commented Ed Roberts Campus President Dmitri Belser.

The Ed Roberts Campus is the first building designed from the ground up to welcome everyone, regardless of ability; and its doors will open officially on Saturday with a celebration scheduled from 1 to 4 p.m.

After the 1 p.m. ribbon cutting, there will be a program showcasing the founding partner agencies that currently offer services in the building, including: Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program (BORP); Center for Accessible Technology (CfAT); Center for Independent Living (CIL); Computer Technologies Program (CTP); Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF);through the Looking Glass (TLG); and World Institute on Disability (WID); as well as building tenants The California Telephone Access Program; The LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired; California Department of Rehabilitation; and Toolworks.

More than 400 guests are expected to attend celebration, including many of those who contributed funds to the $46 million facility, neighbors, the Bay Area disability community, and public. Concurrent with the opening celebration, there will be an exhibit of artwork by artists with disabilities.
LIGHT/DARK: Dance troupe welcomes guests to printmakers’ show

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which she had made by combining French Arches black paper and Nepali Handmade paper. Hilstrom’s book-box featured six pages—mounted accordion style—that had been unfolded upwards almost reaching the ceiling. On its page were representations of rivers, one for each letter of the alphabet.

“And not a single one of them is unpolluted,” she commented. At the opening reception, Hilstrom admitted to having a “thing about water,” and said that she was deeply saddened by the news from Japan of radiation poisoning in the seas.

Mark Zaffron, who teaches printmaking at the SF Art Institute and KALA, was also there answering questions about his etching titled Variables (30 x 26 inches etching, 2011), which he explained was a representation of the evolutionary pressures on humans.

Zaffron’s studio is in West Oakland, where he noticed buildings decay ever so slowly around him. For Variables, Zaffron said that he created the image by combining parts of different neglected buildings, an urban wall, and then overlaying the industrial scene with mathematical representations. In Zaffron’s sky, one can trace the paths of sub-atomic particles after being smashed. On the wall, one can read—as if it were graffiti—a specific mathematical equation that predicts The Motions of a Particle Under the Influence of a Potential. Though Zaffron is not a mathematician or a scientist, he said that he collected these references by mining the research of his colleagues—specifically for the purpose of his printmaking. Indeed, in this etching, they add a logical overlay to what we already understand as true: day-to-day, each of us faces evolutionary pressure wherever we happen to be.

At Saturday’s reception, Zaffron also spoke to other aspects of his involvement in the printmaking community. As one of the founders of the Center for Research, Art, Technology & Education (CRATE), he innovated safer materials for creating etchings and printing at home. In fact, in addition to his other duties, Zaffron teaches his non-toxic printing techniques at the KALA Center in Berkeley. He also mentioned that a show of 18 of his etchings, titled A King of Anthropology, will open at the Merced Multi-Cultural Center will open next Thursday, April 14.

Chagoya was also at the opening reception, and grinning about a special limited edition of prints that he made in partnership with Electric Works and Berkeley Art Center specifically for this show. The digital print (edition of 50) is now available for $250 and the soup can with custom printed label (edition of 25) is only available for purchase as part of the deluxe set for $500. All proceeds support Berkeley Art Center, a private, non-profit organization.

Now through May 29, LIGHT/DARK is showing at Berkeley Art Center located at 1275 Walnut Street on the edge of Live Oak Park.

For hours and more information about Chagoya’s limited edition prints, call (510) 644-6893 or go to www.berkeleyartcenter.org.
LIGHT / DARK

selections by Enrique Chagoya from the California Society of Printmakers

Representative artworks now showing at LIGHT/DARK through May 29 (Clockwise from top left): Garden Confessions (20 x 18 inches, woodcut, 2010) by Sylvia Slocsh Walters; Variables (30 x 26 inches, etching, 2011) by Mark Zaffron; Breakthrough (18 x 16 inches, spit bite aquatint, 2007) by Jessica Dunn; Toro Bots (13 x 18 x 13 inches, screenprint, engraving and letterpress, 2011) by Art Hazlwood; Gaia 18 (28 x 36 inches, linocut & prontoplate, 2006) by Barbara Mihm; Primeval Form 2 (20 x 20 inches, etching & chine colle, 2010) by Priscilla Birge; Canniball soup cans, as part of the limited edition deluxe set, by Enrique Chagoya.