

Visual arts

OverThere

■ A critical guide to San Francisco events

Wear something dark to New Langton Arts' **CLOSED CIRCUIT**—not because it's a somber affair, but because otherwise, you won't get the full effect of Camille Utterback's "Text Rain" installation. Video art has always been a fundamentally interactive artistic medium, often used by artists to "talk back" to the hegemonic mass media. But rarely is the video art viewer invited to participate like this: as you step in between the projector and the wall, your silhouette appears on the screen and accumulates a snowdrift of falling text, as the letters of a poem fall softly from the top of the screen. Stretch out your arms and they settle there in a line, forming a word for a fleeting moment before you shake them off and they continue their slow descent to the bottom. It's poetic in its simplicity, yet jarringly radical in the way it combines the abstract symbolism of language with the raw physicality of human touch (well, virtual touch, anyway).

"Text Rain" alone is worth the trek to the gallery, but Amy Jenkins'

"Pitch and Roll" and Chris Sollars' short video clips tie for a close second place. Jenkins sets up two large projector screens and two small video screens. Her two-part soundtrack combines loud, slurpy smacking (a crude evocation of her first kiss at age thirteen) with the repetitive metallic squeak of a playground swing set. One big screen shows a six-foot-tall close-up of moving lips and tongue. The other shows the view from the swing (trees, grass, trees, grass, trees, grass). The effect of the entire installation is frankly stomach-churning, but it's an awfully effective way to capture thirteen-year-old-ness: half kid, playing in the backyard; half adolescent, fooling around behind the barn.

Chris Sollars contributes a fast-paced melange of absurd yet oddly meditative video clips. He punts soccer balls into quiet landscapes and cityscapes, kisses public sculptures in a wild display of slobbery affection, shaves with an ax in the forest, and carefully picks trash off the street, washes it, and puts it back where it was. Our involvement in this art is different than our involvement in Utterback's "Text Rain"—we watch him perform

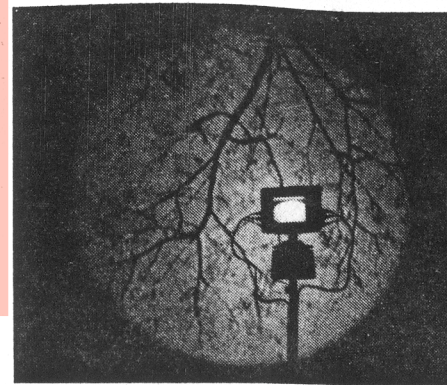
instead of doing our own performing—and it's more humorous than poetic. But even as he scares cows with flying soccer balls or carefully scrubs a bottle of Budweiser he found under a dumpster, Sollars goes about his various performances with just the right air of solemnity.

Other contributing artists include Anthony Discenza and Stacey Lancaster.

CLOSED CIRCUIT, through March 25 at New Langton Arts, 1246 Folsom St. Wednesday through Saturday, 12-5 p.m. 415-626-5416.

the short list

After your visit to the New Langton Arts gallery, check out www.newlangtonarts.org and www.auralaura.com, where Oakland-based artist Ed Osborn presents his **AUDIO RECORDINGS OF GREAT WORKS OF ART**. Osborn has made sound recordings at the sites of famous paintings, sculptures, and other artworks, and the final product is an innovative



PITCH AND ROLL (1998) BY AMY JENKINS

combination of sound, text, and image, "the acoustic life of silent objects." Through March 25.

And for something completely different, visit **THE EARLY YEARS: INUIT SCULPTURE AND PRINTS FROM THE '60s AND '70s**, at Images of the North Gallery. Featured artists include Pauta, Parr, and Pitseolak. Through March 23. 1782 Union St. Mon.-Sat. 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Sun. 12-4 p.m. 415-673-1273.

—Lindsey Westbrook