

A CITY OF BUILDINGS AND CELL PHONES

URBAN EVIDENCE

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Arts Desk Writer

In a world increasingly being taken over by technology, our familiar landscapes are being urbanized. The negotiation between metropolitan space and human interaction is the subject of *Urban Evidence*, a series of exhibitions currently on display at the Sesnon Gallery featuring the artwork of Jody Zellen and Chris Sollars.

A few years ago, this artistic interpretation of public space caught the eye of Shelby Graham, director and curator for the Sesnon Art Gallery. "I felt that they would be perfect for Santa Cruz because we are not an urban space," Graham told *City on a Hill Press* (CHP) after viewing Zellen's work. Graham contacted Sollars whose commentary on city space complemented Zellen's art. Together, their artwork represents a modern view of the urban experience.

Los Angeles based artist Jody Zellen explores metropolitan landscapes through a range of different media forms. Zellen uses found photographic images to create her own city, an interpretation of contemporary city existence. "It's about the life and death of buildings," Zellen told CHP. Colorful, transparent rectangular images hang from the gallery ceilings at varying heights, shifting from the varied illumination of the gallery's lighting. Each piece occasionally overlaps another, creating varied points of view depending on the location in the gallery.

For each viewer, Zellen's art is a different experience. All of Zellen's works are site-specific—her artwork is shaped around the architecture of the gallery. Zellen told CHP, "I'm playing with depth. It becomes a weird experience to never see one thing at a time. This is my first time using hanging transparent pieces and I am very happy with the result."

Zellen also employs technolo-

gy with the use of Flash animation on a framed computer screen to create mobile images that imitate chaotic urban life. For Zellen, she was looking for ways to use the online experience in her art. Similar to her web site, www.ghostcity.com, Zellen's use of animated images enhances the virtual urban experience. "I see the Internet as sculpture," Zellen said.

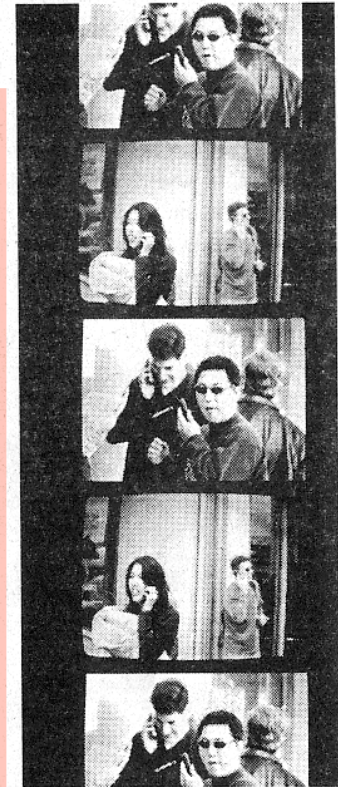
As Zellen conjures up the city setting, Sollars fills it with an activity familiar to many people: talking on a cell phone.

San Francisco based artist Sollars encourages the viewer to observe the urban landscape that has been infested with cellular phones. He has worked on numerous solo and group projects, some which include "Recent Video," at Parlour Projects in Brooklyn, and "Closed Circuit" at the New Langton Arts in San Francisco.

Through the use of photography, video, sound, and drawings, Sollars' art acts as commentary on

the modern technological phenomenon of cellular communication. Through blurred photographs of people with cell phones, Sollars conveys the static and movement of our cellular culture. Sollars wants the viewer to explore these notions of personal and private information that has now moved into the public realm. "What does it mean to have conversations freely and openly instead of reserving for the privacy of our own homes?" Sollars asks. Sollars began to explore the city in search of an answer.

For *Urban Evidence*, Sollars followed and recorded people he would see on the streets of San Francisco talking on a mobile phone. Shifting his focus from one phone user to the next, Sollars described his experience as a child's game. "Following people around was like playing tag. It reminded me of that feeling you get when you are chasing one kid and then you see another kid go by you and you immediately switch and go after them." Sollars



observed most people were too involved in conversation to notice him, while others scurried away.

Urban Evidence is open to the public and will be on display at Porter College's Sesnon Art Gallery until May 4, 2002.