

## Andy Goldsworthy

HAINES

San Francisco

British sculptor Andy Goldsworthy's first West Coast show in four years (up through the second of this month) looks simple: one sculpture and three dozen photographs. But because of the weight of one piece, the owners of the gallery building asked a structural engineer to reassure them that the public's safety wasn't compromised.

For this exhibition Goldsworthy brought several tons of sand into Haines's fifth-story space and built a 60-foot-long serpentine form on the floor. Though only knee-high, it meanders from one wall to the opposite one, blocking the room beyond and forcing visitors to pass through the gallery office and storage area to see the show in its entirety. (One back room at Haines still holds a red clay wall in which cracks have been spreading and deepening since Goldsworthy made it part of his 1996 show.)

The sand snake takes on a sort of bullying animal quality one moment and a process-art inertia the next. It bears no surface trace of the artist's hand, yet it is his invention through and through. Goldsworthy has remarked that he is interested in snakes and rivers because they are things that "draw themselves," as they make their own paths.

The untitled piece can also look like a mountainous element of a colossal relief map. But the artist intended it to refer more directly to architecture than to nature. Sand is among the ingredients of concrete, bricks, and mortar, after all.

The remainder of Goldsworthy's show consists of his photographs of ephemeral artworks he constructed in nature, using leaves, ice, sticks, and sand. Characteristically, the elegance of the artist's photographs matches that of his sculptural ideas.

—Kenneth Baker

## Kenny Scharf

GAGOSIAN

Beverly Hills

Kenny Scharf's allegiance to silliness has always been bolstered by a nostalgia for the icons and sensations of his baby-boomer childhood—one characterized by a steady diet of television and comic books, as well as visits to natural history museums, planetariums, and even art museums.

The bulk of his latest exhibition consisted of Scharf's early-1990s ruminations on yesteryear. In *The Chain of Events* (1990), commercial logos and dog-food packaging intermingle with spacey plants, weird tendrils, and asteroids. Other works, such as *Oozolution* (1994), present Darwinian dioramas in which Scharf explores the depths of a deep blue sea



Andy Goldsworthy,  
*Untitled*, 2000,  
installation view.  
Haines.



Kenny Scharf,  
*Obzglob*, 2000, oil on  
canvas with frame,  
46" x 65½".  
Gagosian.



Dennis Hollingsworth,  
*Fathom*, 2000, oil on  
linen over wood  
panel, 72" x 64".  
Chac Mool.

inhabited by grinning mollusks and smiling seaweed. Scharf's latest paintings, jigsaw-puzzle interlockings of brightly colored, bulbous blobs, as in *Obzglob* (2000), raise his corniness to new heights.

Associated with New York in the 1980s, Scharf left Gotham in the '90s, first for Miami, then for his native L.A. His bumptious, care-free art seems more at home with the natural and material abundance of Sunbelt civilization.

—Peter Frank

## Dennis Hollingsworth

CHAC MOOL

West Hollywood

Dennis Hollingsworth is by no means alone in his reinterpretation of Abstract Expressionism. But at its best, his latter-day gestural painting is especially distinctive for having successfully replaced the movement's heroics with a refined (but not tamed) formalism and a commitment to optical stimulation.

He uses raw, out-of-the-tube colors and paints loopy, playful shapes that suggest naively stylized, 1960s-style hippie-motif flowers. Such quasi-abstractness pervades much painting now prevalent in western American art centers such as Los Angeles, Houston, and Las Vegas. But the Abstract Expressionist inflections all over Hollingsworth's new work—the volcanic cascades of paint, the tendril-like splatters, the large areas of pigment pushed around with a giant palette knife—distance it from the less melodramatic (and often more ironic) canvases of such abstractionists as Ingrid Calame, Monique Prieto, and Aaron Parazette.

Hollingsworth's new series also recapitulates the spooky abstract surrealism that anticipated Abstract Expressionism. The compositional clutter and weird organic references (certain of his paintings seem to have sprouted eyes) hark back to Arshile Gorky and Alfonso Ossorio. It's an august ancestry, but not one that weighs too heavily on Hollingsworth—certainly not in these assured, clever canvases, his best work in years.

—Peter Frank

## Brad Brown

SUSAN CUMMINS

Mill Valley, California

Even for people who do not know the remarkable drawings of San Franciscan Brad Brown, the title of his show, "A Sucking System," was an attention getter.

The title alludes to Samuel Beckett's novel *Molloy*. Its eponymous narrator describes his habit of sucking beach pebbles to distract him from the pointlessness of his life, obsessively rotating them from pocket to mouth to keep from repeating himself. Brown went to similar extremes to