

## Cindy Bernard and Joseph Hammer

Over the past 25 years, Los Angeles has established itself as the country's number-one source for experimental sound-art. Although many Los Angeles sound-artists have been successful overseas for years, they've received little recognition in the Southland until now. This recognition has come in part from European, New York, and Japanese institutions telling Angelenos how hot their own artists really are, and, of course, from the determination and organization of the artists themselves.

Artist Cindy Bernard has taken a cool approach to organizing this somewhat obscure medium by curating exhibits and performances featuring visual artists and experimental musicians. Her current "sound" series in San Pedro regularly showcases local experimental acts like Joe Potts, Kitten Sparkles, Nels Cline, Spastic Colon, and Kraig Grady, to name a few.

Recently relocated to the ultrahip Bergamot Station, the innovative Santa Monica Museum of Art has taken notice of Bernard's endeavors and scheduled a special collaborative performance between her and Solid Eye's Joseph Hammer. As part of SMMA's new Salon Series—"a field guide to the world"—Bernard and Hammer will perform together using light projections (Bernard) and aural montages (Hammer).

Inspired by the iconic representation of such landscapes as the desert images portrayed in the films of John Ford and the magical woods often visualized in the books of the Brothers Grimm, this psychedelic Bonnie and Clyde combine their talents to create a unique performance experience of light and sound. They are on a cerebral quest, seeking memory associations with physical places as induced through exposure to colors and aural cues. Abstract in thought, the physical experience is spell-binding: Cindy projects colors and light upon a scrim while Joseph creates relational aural montages from a variety of vintage magnetic-audio gear including modified oscillators and reel-to-reel tape loops.

The duo first performed together in May for the FAR (Foundation Art Resources) Sonopticon-99 sound and light festival, which featured video projections in conjunction with a variety of sound sculptures. The weekend festival was a total letdown—it turned out to be a bad art-school rave—but Bernard and Hammer held the downtown audience captive as they improvised a set of radiant light and dark drone. As projections glowed on a scrim, Cindy paced the floor intently listening to Joseph's machine sorcery, randomly cueing him to approaching changes in projected light. Joseph, seemingly oblivious to his surroundings, created moody aural representations of Cindy's cinematic projections. Their performance was well received, if not completely understood.

For those patrons of the arts looking for something only Los Angeles can provide, Bernard and Hammer's light/sound improvisation performance at SMMA should surely be a cutting-edge event well worth experiencing. *Fri., July 16, at the Santa Monica Museum of Art's Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica. (Gabie Strong)*