

artshouston

The Art of Design

Two Shows Highlight Art All Around Us

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Deborah Colton Gallery



DiverseWorks Artspace
Flicker Fusion:

Wendy Wagner, Lars Arrhenius, Brent Green, Zhou Xiaohu and Federico Solmi

Nothing to watch because of the writers' strike? Head to DiverseWorks' instant multi-plex to see *Flicker Fusion*, an international gathering of animation artists. Equal parts entertaining and disturbing, the work runs the gamut from artists pushing the limits of technology to more familiar hand-drawn techniques.

It's no wonder that Houston artist Wendy Wagner branched out into animation; her invented species of hose-nosed creatures has always been begging for a larger, moving canvas. In her wall-sized short subject, *The Eternity of a Second*, Wagner's über-perky world takes off with some mighty odd adventures of the snouted folk and their various travels, all punctuated with the kind of bizarre commentary that stays true to Wagner's logic of no-logic. Wagner's harmless-on-the-surface work is wonderfully unsettling. With a pulsing, slightly sinister soundtrack combined with sugary visuals,

the effect is mysteriously menacing. The piece is best viewed while reclining on one of the comfy snout pillows Wagner has provided.

Stockholm-based Lars Arrhenius's *The Street* utilizes iconic functional symbols that inhabit our public spaces to create his blatantly funny and austere world. *The Street* marches through a day in the life of robotic sign people as they go through their daily motions, from work to sex. Routine, habit and mindless action play out in a sped-up scenario. It's a black-for-night, white-for-day world, divided into neat little boxes where life plods onward, driven by an ever-ticking clock.

Brent Green, the most curious of the lot, makes work that begs the question, "How ever do you do that?" Hand drawn people quiver about against backgrounds that look like cave paintings and other unlikely locales. Eerie and enticing, Green's

strange narratives draw the viewer in deeply, casting a nearly hypnotic spell. Zhou Xiaohu pushes claymation to new disturbing heights in *Crowd Around*, which includes a birth scene and other rather grotesque but clever clay accomplishments. On a more subversive note, Italian-born Federico Solmi's biting satire, *King Kong & The End of the World*, takes direct aim at the art world, with King Kong crashing the Guggenheim. Judging from this provocative collection of work, animation is alive, well, and subversive as ever:

-Nancy Wozny

Through February 23rd, | 117 E. Freeway,
 713.223.8346, diverseworks.org

Image: Wendy Wagner, Still from *Eternity of a Second*, 2007