

front. The imagery filling these large-scaled canvases can be seen as dense and colorful floral clusters. There is a delicate balance between positive and negative space as well as between abstraction and representation in these dynamic paintings (d.e.n. Contemporary art, Culver City).

Slovenian born filmmaker **Natasa Prosenic** currently divides her time between Slovenia and Los Angeles. Her site specific two-projector installation explores the spiritual journey of a figure through an evocatively ambiguous natural landscape. The dual projections, one on each side of the wall, picture the blurred face of a woman as fluids pass over her. The intricate sounds of water gurgling inhabit the space. One becomes part of the work as the two projections surround and envelope you. A third projection filling a back hallway depicts an elongated figure who appears engulfed in flames. Prosenic has made single channel as well as video based installation. Her work uses both sound and image to explore varying notions of self in a changing environment (Overtones, Culver City).

John O'Brien's "Pagine Veneziane (the Venice Diaries)" are a series of lyrical mixed media drawings that combine photographically-derived images of historic Italian architecture and biomorphic modernist abstractions. The sharply delineated black and white representations, however fragmented, resonate with fantastical mid-century colors (precisely the saccharine tones used by upscale Milano designers of that era) to evoke Post Modern temporal layering. O'Brien accomplishes this without sinking into melancholy (Kristi Engle Gallery, Downtown).

We know **Sandeep Mukherjee** from his room sized mountain with floating drawn figures shown at Margo Leavin and Pomona College last year, but here he shifts to fully abstract works that involve delicately dripping obsessive watery dots in magenta, ochres and blues into coiling vortices. These spirals are exaggerated by lines radiating from the center, not painted but embossed into the vellum-like

call to mind everything from the inside of shells to the expansion of galaxies (Sister, Downtown).

The notorious bad-boy filmmaker from Baltimore **John Waters** is best known for his eccentric feature films, which include "Hairspray" and "Polyester," and is also a maker of photographs and objects. This exhibition, titled "Change of Life," culls together works spanning forty years, and includes photographic montages as well as sculptural explorations. Poking fun at Hollywood and the cult of the movie star, Waters' static works are as cutting as his films. He is a master of juxtaposition, and has a unique ability to make fun of sex, race and politics in a way that entertains even as it functions as a running commentary on contemporary culture. Included are screenings of his well known as well as little seen film work, as well as photographic sequences that combine images from television which extract new meaning from the banality of the everyday (Orange County Museum of Art [OCMA], Newport Beach, Orange County).

Usually group shows mean reaching into the files willy nilly when gallerists are out of ideas, with typically uneven and vague results. **The Figurative Impulse** is an exception. The quality of the selections here stays exceptionally high and presents a variety of sensibilities, from light-handed, to mysterious, to very erotic. The theme that runs throughout is the body's enduring power as a complex metaphor. Desolate in tone and luminous in its detail, Kent Bellows' "Sora" is a scarred woman in '70s styled hair posed before a stark stone wall. An A-list figurative painter for nearly three decades, Odd Nerdrum moves pain like Delacroix and hints at the kinky subtexts of Balthus in the monumental "Love Divided," capturing two young women intimately near each other. William Beckman's "Study for Diana #1" is a virtuoso pencil drawing of sculptress Diana Moore, and Susan Hauptman's "Self-Portrait as Prima Donna Bitch" admits--almost through hyperbole--the necessary narcissism of the artistic viewpoint (Forum Gallery,