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ART REVIEW

Upstate, From Eerie Video To Moods of Shaker Calm

By HOLLAND COTTER

Bard College

The Center for Curatorial Studies Museum at Bard routinely packages new art in attractive exhibitions. This summer, a recent graduate of the curatorial program, Elizabeth Fisher, has been given most of the gallery space for a group show, "Sodium Dreams." It is based on the theme of urban disconnectedness, here conceived as essentially cinematic in its fluid mingling of fantasy and reality.

This shift between the organic and the artificial runs throughout the show, which gives off a cerebral, stainless-steel chill. Figures that appear in photographs by Hannah Starkey and Sarah Dobai are both "real" people and actors, while the city

comes across as an unstable, splintered, endlessly edited environment in video pieces by Julie Becker, Mark Lewis, Matthias Muller, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and Sarah Morris, and in an installation of sculpture by Martin Boyce.

In addition to "Sodium Dreams," the museum has two small solo shows. One is a video piece by Aïda Ruilova, an impressive young New York artist. Inspired by a scene in Jean-Luc Godard's film "Sympathy for the Devil," it consists of a repeated shot of a woman, lying as if dead, on the arm of a camera crane that keeps swinging back and forth to the sound of heavy breathing.

Slater Bradley contributes a beautiful video titled "Theory and Observation," with close-up shots of children singing and mugging in a cathedral choir and the voice of the physicist Stephen Hawking droning on about the Big Bang, which all sets up a play of faith and reason. A series of 36 photographs by Mr. Bradley, titled "Don't Let Me Disappear," begins with a scene of friends relaxing around a pool; continues with shots of hot-air balloons, political monuments and the World Trade Center; and ends with the picture of a dead whale washed up by the ocean, its tattered carcass transfigured by a golden sunset light. Step by step, it's hard to see where the sequence is going. Together, it all makes sense.

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