

LA Weekly – Pick of the Week by Peter Frank September 13, 2007



Brian and Leon Dewan, *The Age is Mad After Innovation* (2005)

DIY NOISEMAKERS

"The Habit of Innovation," "Sound & Motion"

"The Habit of Innovation" introduces the parallel world of Brooklyn-based cousins Brian and Leon Dewan to an L.A. audience all too ready for their retro-tech trip into midcentury futurism. Assisted by techie Leon, Brian conjures up dorky hybrids of living-room furniture, ecclesiastical cabinets and old-timey radio consoles; the elaborate structures bristle with dials, with the turn or flick of each having some sort of mysterious effect on the sounds emitting from the whole. You can stand there and play each device as a primitive synthesizer, turning a hum into a piercing screech or a pulsating blip pattern into some *Forbidden Planet* eruption; ultimately, by yourself or with other visitors, you turn the gallery into a boxful of postwar electronoise. But kill the racket and turn on the filmstrip projector. Filmstrips — hand-cranked cartoons halfway between movies and slide shows — were the PSA edu-tools of phys-ed and homeroom teachers until about the Vietnam War. Brian Dewan has breathed new life into this moribund technology with some daffy — and often ominous — narrated cartoons, any and all of which are worth the hand-cranking.

A similarly lithe DIY spirit wafts through "Sound & Motion," bringing together the kinetic and acoustic concoctions of five Californians who boldly go where the Dewans have not gone. Diane Landry's hefty self-flipping flipbook, Alan Rath's monitor-tree with its Big Brother eyes, Klutch Stanaway's delicately crafted model of a satellite (or some sort of deep-space travel unit), Paul de Marinis' talking metronome mediating between music and poetry, and Jim Campbell's recording of de Marinis' voice turning into a slowly evolving LED portrait of the speaker — well, these capsule descriptions barely scratch the surface of a body of work that itself barely scratches the surface of a refreshingly ambitious but unpretentious movement and spirit. "The Habit of Innovation" at *Another Year in L.A.*, 2121 N. San Fernando Rd., L.A.; Tues.-Fri. noon-5 p.m., Sun. 1-4 p.m.; thru Sept. 28. (323) 223-4000.

"Sound & Motion" at *SolwayJones*, 5377 Wilshire Blvd., L.A.; Tues.-Sat. 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; thru Sept. 29. (323) 937-7354.

—Peter Frank