

CALENDAR

SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 2011 • LATIMES.COM/CALENDAR

AN APPRECIATION

A jolt
from
Lanford
Wilson

The playwright enriched American theater and changed a life in the process.

CHARLES McNULTY
THEATER CRITIC

The two playwrights most often invoked to describe Lanford Wilson's style are Anton Chekhov and Tennessee Williams.

From Chekhov, Wilson learned the compositional possibilities of ensemble pieces and the way the inner life is thrown into relief when the outer life slows down. From Williams, Wilson learned the power of the poetry of longing and the importance of fleshing out a world on stage. No American dramatist has been able to match Williams' gift for lyrical realism, but Wilson, hailing from Lebanon, Mo., rather than the Deep South, came closest.

How strange to write of him in the past tense. That Wilson was 73 when he died [See Wilson, D13]



BOB CHAMBERLIN L.A. Times

AT WORK: Lanford Wilson in 1979.

Other direction

Star Connie Stevens finds fulfillment in the director's seat. **D6**

Comics **D14-15**
TV grid **D16**



JAY L. CLENDENIN Los Angeles Times

UNFOLDING: Kim Schoenstadt's "Painted Over/Under" came together with the help of various artists, writers and architects.

Art's big reveal

Kim Schoenstadt wraps up — or is it unwraps? — her yearlong project at LACE to expose the accidental artistry of the collaborative process.

BY JORI FINKEL >>> Kim Schoenstadt was patiently removing a web-like vinyl pattern from a gallery wall at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, better known as LACE, this week. The artist peeled the vinyl tape off slowly and carefully, like you would peel a persistent sticker from a ripe piece of fruit.

"I love this moment," says Schoenstadt. "It's definitely the prestige moment, like the big reveal in a magic trick where the woman who has disappeared comes back or the rabbit comes out of the hat."

Yet the forms emerging from this particular reveal were not nearly as recognizable as a rabbit. As Schoenstadt removed the vinyl, she revealed vestiges of previous paintings made by other artists on these walls since June 2010: slivers of red here, some black stripes there.

It would be an understatement to say that Schoenstadt's work, which goes on show at LACE on Sunday and represents the final phase of her highly collaborative, yearlong project there, has many layers. It is called "Painted Over/Under" for a reason.

Starting last June, she turned over the back room of the nonprofit gallery to about two dozen writers, artists and architects to paint their own works on the walls. Before being painted over with large blocks of color, each work was covered with a section of her 126-foot-long vinyl drawing. Now she's digging that vinyl pattern from layers of paint to reveal a spiky "wall drawing" that snakes across five walls like a vast cityscape and preserves [See LACE, D10]

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JAY L. CLENDENIN Los Angeles Times

PATTERNS: Assistants remove the vinyl strips from "Painted Over/Under" to reveal the layered painting.

A painting's many pasts

[LACE, from D1] bits of color and texture from these earlier works.

"It's not the easiest project to explain," says the artist, who at 37 is reaching the point professionally, thanks to several museum projects, where she is increasingly asked to explain herself. "Sometimes I think of it in terms of refinishing a door. When you sand off different layers, you can see all of its histories emerge."

You could also find computer-age analogies, since her drawing looks like some sort of distributed network connecting different artists' work.

Schoenstadt has been working in a similar vein for a few years. She likes to use vinyl tape to draw instead of, say, pencil. She is known for artwork that is collaboration-based and process-oriented instead of ego-driven and product-obsessed. And she does wonders with negative space.

In an earlier series, "Can Control," she would spray paint a canvas after applying a vinyl drawing to it. Removing the vinyl revealed a drawing made out of the negative space of the canvas.

In cooping up the new project, Schoenstadt says she was thinking about two sorts of art. One was Robert Rauschenberg's famous "Erased de Kooning Drawing" from 1953, which she recently saw at SFMOMA. In this work, Rauschenberg vigorously erased the more established artist's drawing until little was left but the efforts of erasure. It leaves a lot, she says, to the imagination.

Around the same time she also found herself drawn

to a white truck parked on the streets near her home in Venice that was a target for graffiti. "This truck would get tagged again and again, and the owner would paint it out in a very sloppy way" — some mismatched white here or green house paint there. She found this visible history of over-painting compelling.

"The truck is like a painting by Joan Mitchell or Hans Hoffman," she says, later adding: "I love living in a city where there is so much accidental art you can see every day."

In some way, her LACE project is an attempt at recreating this sort of gritty, multi-layered, accidental art in a gallery setting. Yes, a few things fell under the artist's control, starting with the 126-foot vinyl-cut drawing inspired, like much of her work, by architectural forms. Here she drew from some skeletal images of half-built luxury hotels in the Sinai Peninsula, as photographed by Sabine Haubitz and Stefanie Zoche. ("There was a socio-economic reason that these hotels were abandoned, and there's a socio-economic reason that things in the city are painted over instead of chemically removed," she says.)

She had input in other areas too. She chose seven paint colors — some muted and some bold — for painting over the other artists' contributions. And she chose the three curators who would each oversee a phase of the project.

Then the collaboration took on a life of its own. From June to September, a set of writers chosen by the small nonprofit publisher Les

'Sometimes I think of it in terms of refinishing a door. When you sand off different layers, you can see all of its histories emerge.'

—KIM SCHOENSTADT, on 'Painted Over/Under'

Most of it was coming off quickly and cleanly. But she admitted to feeling sick with suspense the night before.

"A lot of my projects involve the possibility of failure. What if the vinyl didn't pull up because there were too many layers of paint on top of it? Or what if the vinyl pulled the paint off in large sheets? There are a lot of things that could go wrong."

Some surprisingly beautiful passages were under the vinyl, one of which had the intricacy of a Brice Marden drawing. It originated with a work made last fall by artist Zorouhie Abdalian. "It was a great project," Schoenstadt says. "She projected these photos onto the wall every 30 seconds or so to be traced very quickly on the wall. So her area got really messy, with lots of different lines and weights of line."

While Schoenstadt was talking and walking, a few vinyl strips the size of gum wrappers got stuck to the bottom of her tennis shoes. Larger scraps were balled up on the floor.

Still other sections of the vinyl tape had been carefully laid out into a sketchbook to make small drawings, which will be hung on one of the room's few blank walls.

"I've done this several times before with projects, and it's always had this minimal/maximal tension," she says. While the drawings seem simple, "the walls are so busy."

At least right now. For it's the nature of the project to remind us that walls with a rich history could have a long and varied future ahead of them too.

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12:10 2:35 5:00 7:40 10:05

THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU [PG13]
11:40 2:20 4:55 7:40 10:20

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BEASTLY [PG13] 2:00 2:40 3:20 4:00 4:40 5:20 6:00 6:40 7:20 8:00 8:40 9:20 10:00

HALL PASS [R] @ 1:15 1:50 2:30 3:10 3:50 4:30 5:10 5:50 6:30 7:10 7:50 8:30 9:10 9:50

JUST GO WITH IT [PG13] 11:20 1:00 4:45 7:30 10:15

LIMITLESS [PG13]
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11:45 12:55 2:30 3:45 5:00 6:20 7:40 9:00 10:20

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