Call me a purist, but there are three things wrong with the title of this compilation: It is neither abstract, jazz nor appropriate to play in a lounge. Rather, this electronic journey is on the acid jazz, smoother side of the loop-based tracks found in clubs. This kind of music is highly useful for getting the dancers who dig mellow music out on the floor without falling into too many deadly boring drum 'n' bass clichés.

Highlights on Jazz Lounge III include the Innerzone Orchestra's hypnotic "At Les" and the funky "I Am (Original Mix)" by the reliable Yoshitoshi Paktourni, which sounds like a computerized Jamiroquai cover. Wow, a few of these tracks actually use real live instruments instead of samples (the local musicians union thanks you). Lowlights include the Underworld-biting track by YMC, a sleep-inducing cover. Wow, a few of these tracks actually

Demos, still no surefire cure for a hangover and still no way to stop rock 'n' roll frontmen from putting out the obligatory solo album that is completely self-indulgent (see Sting for the evil paradigm). Just wait til Zach de la Rocha's solo comes out and it sounds like Puff Daddy (R.I.P. Rage). For some reason out there like me, '70s sci-fi dork band Rush (Geddy Lee's band) is a guilty pleasure; but Rush fans, heed my warning: Avoid this album like the plague!

Let us check for symptoms of the Paralyzing Rock Solo Virus. Does overproduction make My Favorite Headache lack form or meaning? Yes, blandness abounds, but boy, is it ever clean. Are the lyrics devoid of emotion, energy or social relevance? Yes, quickly cover your ears.

If Rush is like the girl/boy you had drunken sex with when it seemed like a good idea, Let's Headache is the hangover headache and venereal disease you woke up with the next morning. I can only pray to the Hendrix Buddha that bad taste isn't contagious. [Joseph Martinez]

When it's all about setting the mood, the right sound is essential. With an ambient quality, Mount Florida's debut Arrived Phoenix presents itself as perfect chill-out music for its listeners. Comparable to the likes of Orbital and The Orb, Mount Florida's album possesses an overall slow mood. Tracks like "Postal" sounds throughout the album, which either serve to up the tempo or slow things down.

Although Arrived Phoenix may be one of the best albums to sit back and have a couple of drinks to, it still refuses to effect an overall slow mood. Tracks like "Foothills" make use of a heavier and more aggressive tone, forcing the tempo of the album away from any sense of repetition. Upon the first listen the album has a great sound with each of the tracks masterfully set against each other, starting off slow in the beginning, picking up the pace toward the center, and again finishing with a slow sound that provides a sense of closure.

M.P. Lancaster and Twitch have truly created something that is familiar in its atmospheric quality yet still proves to have an original mastery of the sound. [Jim St. John]
Loserville," this woman yells in truth, "I fuck to cum, I fuck to cum!" Rewind a few button presses to "Natural Disasters" and Propagandhi excuses suburban parents for the dildos in their drawers, saying, "Don't condemn your life to be riddled with shame."

These words bring back Bad Religion memories, and that's why they're so moving. Rather than reminding us of the hot topics and injustice flavors of the month, this hard-to-bear album lifts the silver top off our plate, flicks away the garnish and says, "Eat up on reality." [Mehoke G. Mane]

Tribute albums are funny things. Usually filled with random musicians, they give the artist lip service while at the same time ruining the original songs. Undoubtedly, they make the unique artist seemingly a wasteful act. The album is powerful yet emotional. The album is powerful yet emotional. The album is powerful yet emotional.

There are a few weak songs on the album, however. Fred Durst's rag-rock hybrid sounds very tired here, and he seems more concerned with giving props to Limp Bizkit. Despite the many singers, the album maintains a consistent feel throughout. Snot Up definitely deserves a listen from any hard rock fan. [John Syquia]

Mastering the art of hip, smooth downtempo can be tricky, but David Kakon of Jaffa makes it seem like child's play. The songs are so reminiscent of '70s soul, you almost expect to hear Marvin Gaye or Al Green crooning in the background.

Elevator (which is anything but the traditional conception of elevator music) refuses to disappoint. The entire album moves at a very consistent rate, with just enough variation to keep its listeners on their toes. What makes Elevator truly remarkable is its modern rendition of the Billie Holiday classic "God Bless the Child." Jaffa takes the song and revolutionizes it by having sultry vocals set against a downtempo beat — now this is truly what sampling should emulate. Rather than feeling as though the song was shamelessly ripped-off, I felt as though the song was given new life.

The throwback to the '70s not only captures the sound in a new way, but also the sense of the decadence of the era. The Black Halos has a second LP and probably an accompanying U.S. tour. It's probably pretty happy. [Collin Mitchell]
PICTURES WORTH 1,000 WORDS?
DUAL VISIONS FAILS TO MAKE ITS MARK

I was sitting in Art Studio 2D last quarter when Ms. Beckman asked the class, "How many of you want to create representational images?" In a class of about 200 people, maybe 40 hands shot up in affirmation. Ms. Beckman responded, "Why not just take a picture?"

You might have interpreted her response as a quick and clever commentary on the role of realism in the artistic creation. Since the advent of the camera, why bother rendering what actually is? Why not open yourself up to what you see? Does art begin where realism ends?

As the ultimate conspirator of realism, photography has lounged in a limbo between fine art and mere documentation since its inception. Admittedly, the range of photography definitely encompasses the gamut from strict scientific illustration to mixed-media abstract collage. And then, of course, there are landscapes. No setups, no intervention; some would say there's very little reflection of the artist at all. The realism labor to communicate the "scale and grandeur," "the power of nature" and "the majesty." But is that enough to earn a place in the world of fine art?

The recent show at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art presents yet another opportunity to discuss the place in the world of fine art that photography occupies. "Dual Visions of the Americas West" features the photography of Santa Barbara native artists MacDuff Everton and David Muench. These two are photographers, realists and they each lend their "good eyes" to current exhibits featuring — you guessed it — landscapes and other portraits of good old Mother Nature.

The exhibits are physically separated into adjoining shows, each exhibiting approximately 20 shots. Everton communicates lonely and ominous panoramas while Muench meticulously carves "ancient patterns" onto film. They both do a fine job of articulating the common exceptionally — or is it the exceptionally common?

It's interesting that the museum's website describes these two as "contemporary photographers." If their images were paintings of landscapes, would they still hold up the title of "contemporary?" You know, the Contemporary Arts Forum is just down the block from Santa Barbara's more mature museum. Would they show up the title of "contemporary?" You know, the "contemporary" work, you might find just a bit more been done before, it's the fury, fun and flaws that the artist adds to the subject matter that spins our wheels. That makes it art.

If nature is good subject matter, go outside. When you return to your work, draw from your inspiration and make your mark. As carpentry is to architecture, so is realism to creation. With so many rules to follow, why not celebrate the opportunity to create without bounds? That's what is to be revered in fine art, how much of the artist can we know from a picture of a thunderstorm moving across a moody desert landscape? If we lure the lens past the expression in abstraction into realistic portrayal, what opportunity do we have to sneak a peek at the artist's inner workings?

As students of art, we've heard that "Everything has been done before." If that's true, perhaps art's frontier is in the residue that's left on a piece after it has passed through the artist. As voyeuristic consumers of art, we want what's under the covers. We appreciate the privilege of being let in on the source of the steam, the personal and the contemporary passion. Since everything has been done before, it's the fury, fun and flaws that the artist adds to the subject matter that spins our wheels. That makes it art.

With regard to "Dual Visions," maybe you should go see it. Or just skip it. If you're saving up your energy for a trip downtown, consider holding off for the Contemporary Arts Forum's "Portraits 2000" opening this weekend upstairs from California Pizza Kitchen in Paseo Nuevo. In contrast to Everton and Muench's "contemporary" work, you might find just a bit more expression in this exhibit.

Santa Barbara's more mature museum. Would they show these two artists — photos, paintings or otherwise? There are several well-focused academic arguments on the "Is photography art?" discussion available via the web. One thesis includes some comments from artists that go a long way toward crystallizing some of the sentiment behind this debate.

Everton and Muench's subject matters' most interesting qualities may be that they serve as poignant examples in the discussion on "Is photography art?" If the "artist's involvement" is what is to be revered in fine art, how much of the artist can we know from a picture of a thunderstorm moving across a moody desert landscape? If we lure the lens past the expression in abstraction into realistic portrayal, what opportunity do we have to sneak a peek at the artist's inner workings?

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If you're anything like the Artweek editorial board, you're probably missing the flair of sophistication in your life. Don't worry, sweetie, we have the solution. It's time for some dining and dancing downtown with chic, older members of society. Why not check out Raw Silk featuring Leslie Lembo? Although it's not clear exactly what kind of music Everton and Muench's subject matters' most interesting qualities may be that they serve as poignant examples in the discussion on "Is photography art?" If the "artist's involvement" is what is to be revered in fine art, how much of the artist can we know from a picture of a thunderstorm moving across a moody desert landscape? If we lure the lens past the expression in abstraction into realistic portrayal, what opportunity do we have to sneak a peek at the artist's inner workings?

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Madhouse has drink specials during this special night. OK, so this isn't a picture of Madhouse's Hip Hop Lounge. But pride fucks with Mickey and he doesn't go down as a simpleton. Instead, Ritchie has plot twists pile up endlessly on each other like some highway catatrophe to the point that it's hard to make anything out of the mayhem. This superficial, hopeful audience-pleasing ultimately makes "Snatch" a cheap and unsatisfying film. It is Turkish in the film, it is Turkish (Jason Statham), the film's narrator and an underground boxing promoter who is trying to hit the big time by arranging a fixed fight with the brutal promoter Brick Top (Alan Ford). When Turkish's fighter gets knocked out by a mauling Italian gypsy named Mickey (Brendan Fraser), Turkish gets him to stand in for a fixed fight. But pride packs with Mickey and he doesn't go down as planned, setting up a second fight which could put his and Turkish's lives in danger.

Meanwhile, a diamond heist goes down in which Franky Four Fingers (an underused Benicio Del Toro) lifts a humongous gem to give to his boss Avi. Placing a bet on Turkish's boxing match, he lets Russian gangster Boris the Blade onto the scene, who proceeds to set up Franky to get mobbed by his buddies Vinnie and Sol. After Franky gets jacked, Avi gets hard-ass "Bullet Tooth" Tony (Vinnie Jones from "Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels") to get the diamond back. Needless to say, double-crossing, back-stabbing and violence ensues as the diamond chasers' path intersects with Brick Top's operations. Beyond the painstaking similarities to Tarantino's, the problem with "Snatch" is that the film is so forced it seems like one big exercise of willpower. Nothing is allowed to occur gradually or organically, as Ritchie doesn't give his actors (and they're all actors) any time to really get into their roles. Instead, Ritchie has plot twists just to plot twists without having them serve any larger purpose. The result is a film that runs up, down and back again like children on a treasure hunt.

Beyond the killer soundtrack and some real laugh-out-loud moments, Pitt is the main highlight of the film. Back in "Fight Club" form, he brings Mickey to life amid all the "fucking-this," "fucking-that" one-liners and one-dimen-sional characters. Finding his old "Devil's Own" dialect back, Pitt is hilarious. A lot of people were beyond the painfully glaring similarities to Tarantino, the problem with "Snatch" is that the film is so forced it seems like one big exercise of willpower. Nothing is allowed to occur gradually or organically, as Ritchie doesn't give his actors (and they're all actors) any time to really get into their roles. Instead, Ritchie has plot twists just to plot twists without having them serve any larger purpose. The result is a film that runs up, down and back again like children on a treasure hunt.

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Peter’s Coming along with International Star June Foray and her Friends
Rocky, Natasha, Nell of “The Rocky & Bullwinkle Show”
Circle Foundation, Santa Barbara News-Press Present
Peter & Wolf
Sunday, January 28, 2001
5:00 PM
Lobero Theatre
33 East Canon Perdido Street, Santa Barbara
plus “CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS”

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The sting tells you it's working.
LIKE SNATCH, BUT FRENCH! AND OLD!
FRENCH NOIR CLASSIC RIFIFI MAKES A WORTHY COMEBACK

writing fifty, julie kraim

The term “rififi” is underworld French slang for rough and tumble, usually associated with combat between rival gangs. Jules Dassin’s 1955 French film noir “Rififi” attempts to explain the meaning of this through an exquisitely engineered jewelry heist that looks way ahead of its time in a 2001 viewing.

The movie starts briskly, getting right to the point as it introduces the four main characters that make up a gang of thugs. Jo the Swede (Carl Mohner) and Tony the Stephanois (Jean Servais) had done jobs together before, one of which sent Tony to jail for five years. Leaving the joint, he finds his girlfriend has left him for Grutter, a nightclub owner. Jo, wanting to build up Tony’s morale, informs him of his plan to rob a jewelry store along with Mario (Robert Manuel), an Italian pimp, and his friend Cesar (Jules Dassin). The planning of the robbery is like watching kids in a basement working on a science project.

What results is the most captivating silent 30 minutes of film that I have ever seen. Methodical and flawless, these four soundlessly break into the store, deactivate the alarm and rob the safe before escaping. Contrary to most modern films, which manipulate your feelings with their musical score, there is no need for music in “Rififi” to evoke emotion from the audience. In fact, it is this lack of music that makes the scene so realistic, causing me to lean forward on my couch, tense and fixated.

“Rififi” takes a sharp turn in the aftermath of the robbery. After acquiring millions of francs worth of jewels, Cesar, in an act of lust, gives one of his favorite showgirls a diamond ring, which she shows to her boss, Grutter. Grutter is anxious to get Tony out of the picture, and connects the robbery to Cesar and Tony. The ensuing scenes are violent free-for-alls where everybody is out to get the money and the jewels.

Despite the characters’ moral failings, it is easy to sympathize with them and cheer them on. This is primarily due to the sharp dialogue and excellent acting of Servais, Mohner, Manuel and Dassin. One is also led to sympathize with Jo due to his young son, to whom we are immediately introduced.

As the director, Dassin refuses to gloss over any part of the movie and creates a realistic sequence of events that speaks louder than most rough and tumble films. As film noir, the effective lighting in the film is incredibly important in creating shadows and emotion, filling the role that music usually plays in setting a scene.

Dassin made this film after going into exile in Europe when the House Committee on Un-American Activities labeled him a communist in 1952. Angry, smart and fascinating, “Rififi” is not to be missed.

“Rififi” screens Sunday, January 28, 7:30 p.m. at Campbell Hall. $5 students; $6 general.
Few kids growing up in our lowest-income areas have ever heard of an AP biology class.

Ray Chin started one in inner-city Los Angeles. In one year, he coached 20 of his 26 students to score a 3 or better on the exam.

We need more Ray Chins.

Information Session
Tuesday, January 30, 2001 • 6:00 p.m.
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Webb 1100