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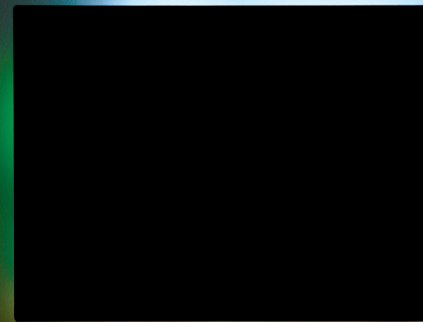
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EXHIBIT

**PIXEL PERFECT** *Jim Campbell, a former HD video engineer, goes lo-fi at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art.*

Dark Lights

THE DARK GALLERY is full of people. Some are sitting on the long wooden bench at the back of the room. Others mill about, shifting back and forth on the balls of their feet, comfortable position after another. Everyone is staring straight ahead at the black box centered in the middle of a white wall.

They murmur to each other: What is behind the box? Why is it emitting a kaleidoscope of colors? A few move forward to peer behind the box, unable to let the mystery be.

The box in question—A Fire, a Freeway and a Walk, 1999-2000 (pictured)—is part of a new installation by artist Jim Campbell at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art. “Jim Campbell: New Works and Collaborations with Jane Rosen” fills three large galleries with a series of LED (light-emitting diode) displays. Upon entering the exhibit, all of the Institute’s overhead lights are turned off. It’s a departure from most gallery and museum visits where the act of looking at the art is entirely dependent on warm and inviting lights. In “New Works,” the art provides all of the light.

The first gallery holds the video installation Home Movies Pause, 2014, which dominates the wall like a small movie screen. The video that’s projected appears to be an outdoor scene in the sunshine, capturing people out for a walk in the park. But it’s hard to tell. The footage here, as in all of his work, is deliberately blurred and pixelated. The eyes strain the way they do at a visit to the optometrist. Focus is impossible and beside the point.

In his former career, Campbell put his twin MIT degrees in engineering and math to use building high definition televisions. These days, however, he is more interested in low def, a format that lends itself to conjuring the ethereal. Like the pulsating shadows of caged birds, and swimmers treading through aqueous light. Each piece becomes a television screen broadcasting a transmission from the artist’s unconscious. These fuzzy, flickering compositions have the potential to wash over the patient viewer like half-remembered dreams or distant childhood memories.

As Ernst Mach, the noted philosopher and physicist suggested, the element of wonder lies not in the phenomenon itself, but in the mind of the observer. Decoding Campbell’s visual messages requires a certain level of viewer engagement. Allow yourself to be hypnotized by them; the reward is a series of dark, contemplative delights. —*Jeffrey Edalatpour*

Jim Campbell: New Works
and Collaborations with
Jane RosenThru Feb 7
San Jose Institute of
Contemporary Art