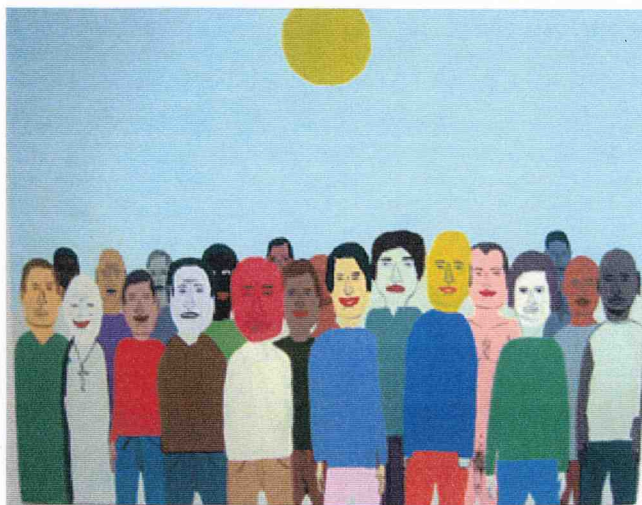


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'Dudes,' oil on wood, Chris Johanson.

## The out of towners

**'Taqueria Cancun: The San Francisco Hook-up,'**  
**Randy Colosky, Stephen Funk, Christopher Garrett,**  
**Jo Jackson, Chris Johanson, Ruth Laskey, Ben**  
**Peterson, Jonathan Runcio and Christopher Taggart**  
**Allston Skirt Gallery, Boston.**

Can a sampling of work by a handful of artists tell us anything about the spirit of current art in a city the size of San Francisco?

In the case of "Taqueria Cancun: The San Francisco Hook-up," we get to see work by nine of independent curator Chris Perez's choices of Bay-Area artists who best represent the current scene in that city. (The show is named for the curator's favorite San Francisco taco stand, by the way.)

While the show has a catchy name, and the selected art has strong points, there's nothing here that speaks in a particularly distinctive San Franciscan voice. There are, however, some fine works among the selections on view.

Ecologically minded Chris Johanson paints on salvaged pieces of wood, and his work has the direct simplicity of folk art. He paints a couple having sex, a multi-ethnic group of men, one of them inexplicably naked, and an abstract work with a pattern that seems to radiate from the image's center — not exactly subjects for Grandma Moses, but provocative paintings nonetheless.

The future looks grim in Randy Colosky's paintings on paper. The air is fouled, water is not potable and the landscape is one highway interchange after another. Despite the relentless gloom, the paintings have a strangely uplifting energy.

The exhibit also brings together, Stephen Funk, with his glittery collages of metallic plastic — the artist's name is a perfect fit for his imagery — Christopher Garrett, whose childlike drawings form an indecipherable, erotically charged narrative, and Jo Jackson, whose painting of a mountain of skulls manages to be almost cheerful in spite of itself.

Ruth Laskey weaves rectangles of linen, and on them she paints shapes reminiscent of bodily organs. There's an exciting simplicity to her work that that eschews painterly sleight of hand.

Ben Peterson paints what appear to be odd diagrams for construction projects. Jonathan Runcio silk screens and paints small colorful abstract works. Christopher Taggart's line drawing of a chair seems like it might have been hand sewn with fine green threads by a clever needle crafter.

It's hard to pin down the mood of art in any one place these days. Maybe it's time to compare and contrast art from the Bay Area with that from our own fair city. How about a show of Boston artists in San Francisco? Are you listening, Chris Perez?

**Paul Parcellin**