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Jennifer Steinkamp  
ACME  
By Christopher Miles

Jennifer Steinkamp's latest exhibition included three digital videos. *Mar Vista* (2002), a collaboration with composers Holly Lovecat and Jimmy Johnson, who provide a likable, techno-y score, is a small projected digital animation that takes a romantic seascape as its promising point of departure. But the work only occasionally manages to separate itself from the sorts of virtual experiences of space becoming increasingly common in mainstream media; at best, the work points to future possibilities as Steinkamp pushes into territory marked by synthesized representational imagery. Meanwhile, *Glimpse* (1997), another small projection piece seeming less invested in keeping up with the new-media Joneses, is a simple, fresh, and hypnotic abstract composition of variously colored concentric ovals pushing outward from the center, offering a silent invitation to get lost in its rhythmic pulse.

The show's centerpiece was an installation of three high-definition videos projected side by side to line the space with neat columns of flowers, composing an amazing kind of floral wallpaper with broad vertical stripes of pattern and color. But this densely blooming wallpaper is fluid, and motion is everywhere: The flowers sway, lift and bow in unison, as if collectively dancing or being blown by a breeze. They are incredibly bright, set off against a background of shadowy foliage disappearing into blackness -- suggesting that the blooms are illuminated or, as I like to think of them, brought to light. The wallpaper comparison is by no means a swipe, but rather speaks to Steinkamp's long-running preoccupation with the use of moving images in architecture, and her unabashed impulse to decorate space. This isn't a fun room: It's a joy room, and if I could swing the deal, I would live in it.

A sweet real-life backdrop for this room was the awarding of the Nobel Prize to Jimmy Carter, after whom the piece is named. I've never liked works that depend on titles; here, however, a title that initially seems uncomfortably grafted onto the work settles into a nice harmony. The projections don't inspire you to think about Carter the man, but I couldn't help but think that they do inspire you to tap into a collection of feelings and ideas, an attitude toward the world, of which Carter has become a rare personification of the global stage. If Carter is a personification then Steinkamp's *Jimmy Carter* (2002) is an encapsulation. In more ways than one a projection onto space -- real space, the world

around us -- *Jimmy Carter* is a vision of quiet, calm, and beauty. It might sound silly, but watching Steinkamp's installation is something like watching Carter smile. Luminous and light as the work may be, it isn't lite.

“Flower Power” is likely the expression sitting on the top of your tongue right about now, so I'll go ahead and spill it on the page. The idea seems to make sense in discussing a work of art named for a peacemonger and that seems in its silence to offer a lovely discord to the chorus of other mongerism defining recent moments. But I'd wager that even in the best of times, this experience would stand out as a revelation.