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"Superlight"

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Silicon Valley may be the locus of technological innovation, but its role in the arts has a spottier reputation. 01SJ, a biennial event of live and gallery activity in San Jose, is an attempt to foster some critical reflection in this valley of digital mavericks. The live events have passed, but "Superlight," the event's main exhibition component, is on view through the summer. Organized by Steve Dietz, the exhibition finds inspiration in a moment when "digital art" is not easily confined to computer monitors and electronic sound tracks. The are some engaging holdovers of a more traditional tech aesthetic among the nearly two dozen artists and collaborative teams whose work is on view here, including Adam Nash's *Ways to Wave*, 2008, a "3D multi-user environment" involving animated renderings and a parallel project in Second Life, and Taiwanese artist Shih Chieh Huang's perversely adorable robotic creatures made from plastic bags, water bottles, and electric fans. But more often, the included artists address the atmosphere of uncertainty and free-floating analog anxiety in a technologized global culture. The show includes commissioned and existing works that don't always reveal their digital roots as they question whether today's technology will really solve ills caused by previous technological developments. Daniel Faust's series of elegant and slightly wistful color photographs imparts a sense of Silicon Valley's history, be it in the form of corporate architecture or outmoded data archives, which are both depicted as oddly human. Lynn Hershman Leeson's *Global Mind Radar/Reader (An Emotional Barometer)*, 2008, literally takes a cultural pulse by using live blog input, while projects by the collectives Free Soil and Red 76 tap into a pervasive yearning for utopian endeavors, in both real and Second life. (It should be said, though, that the chartlike presentation of these projects doesn't quite convey the vitality of the off-site, community-based activities that really form the pieces.) More insistent is documentation of projects by HeHe (Helen Evans and Heiko Hansen), a pair of Paris-based designers who harness information about carbon-filled industrial pollution, secondhand smoke, and various light sources and inventively visualize it in order to urge us to look at the world with an uneasy sense of wonder. From a literal standpoint, their work fits this exhibition's premise best—their use of light in *Nuage Vert (Green Cloud)*, 2008, is a tech-enhanced, inspiring way to signal troubles in the atmosphere.

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