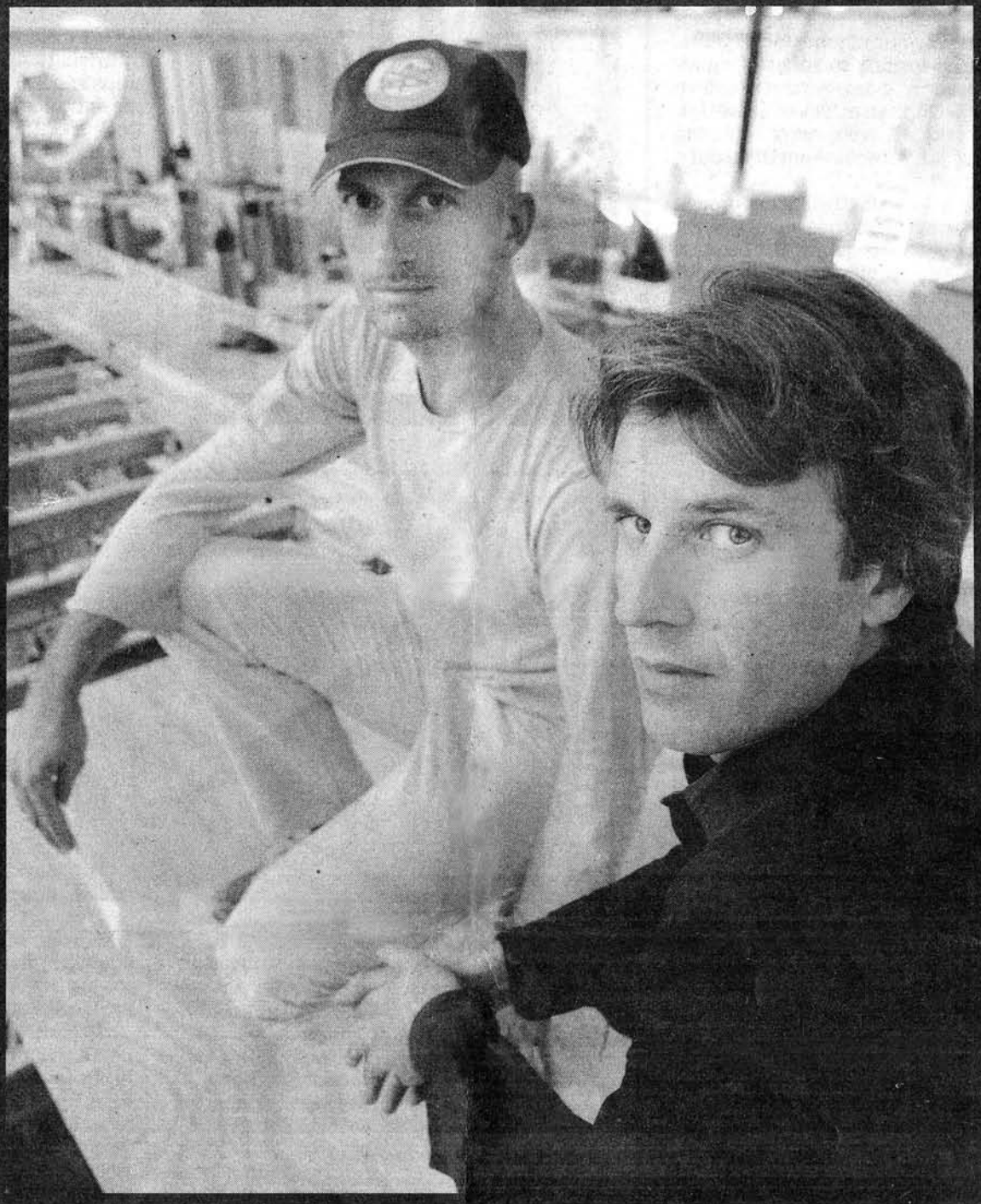


CALENDAR weekend

Los Angeles Times
Thursday, September 9, 2004
calendarlive.com/weekend



Photographs by KEN HIVELY *Los Angeles Times*

EXPERIMENTERS: Fritz Haeg, left, and Francois Perrin created "the gardenLAB experiment," an interactive, ecologically themed exhibition at Art Center College of Design.

From the desert to the sea: L.A. in 16,000 square feet

By SUSAN CARPENTER
Times Staff Writer

NO one knows exactly what will happen as 100 artists, designers, architects, scientists, activists, writers, filmmakers and performers join forces for "the gardenLAB experiment." But the ambitious, ecologically themed exhibition at Art Center College of Design's Wind Tunnel in Pasadena is bound to be different.

'the gardenLAB experiment'

Where: Art Center College of Design, South Campus, Wind Tunnel, 950 S. Raymond Ave., Pasadena

When: 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays (special events, lectures, performances and films, 2 to 8 p.m. Saturdays)

Ends: Oct. 16

Price: Free

Info: (626) 396-2380 or www.gardenlab.org

tal groups like TreePeople and Friends of the Los Angeles River, listen to lectures on foraging for food in the city and take guided hikes through the exhibits.

"All of us are doing work that in some way engages the intersection of nature and culture, or the urban and the natural," said Emily Scott, one of 12 "L.A. Urban Rangers" who, in authentic ranger Stetsons, will be giving campfire talks and leading visitors on tours each Saturday afternoon beginning Sept. 18. A former park ranger and UCLA art history PhD, Scott said, "It's going to be exciting and curious to re-imagine traveling through an art exhibit as you would a natural landscape, where you come upon things and interpret them."

An environmental opera about the Biosphere, a 60-foot-tall beanstalk and an awning crocheted from thousands of recycled plastic grocery bags are some of the more enterprising interpretations of ecology that are in the works. Many more will evolve over the course of the show, which began Tuesday and runs through Oct. 16.

"Within Los Angeles, we wanted to look at who are the people who are looking at ecology, and not discriminate by discipline," said Fritz Haeg, an architect and Art Center instructor who co-created the exhibi-

tion with colleague Francois Perin. "'Environmentalism' and 'ecology' have been loaded terms since the '70s, so the only way you can move forward from those preconceptions is having multiple points of view."

Over the course of the exhibition, visitors will have the opportunity to see the '80s horror film "Children of the Corn," as well as an environmentally sustainable Ecoshack desert camping shelter. They can shop at a farmers market or get involved in various projects involving mold, recycling and compost. They can take in displays by environmen-



ART MEETS SCIENCE: Laura Cooper sets up an exhibit for the interdisciplinary show, which focuses on the L.A. environment.



are mostly FBI, SOG, etc. It's going to be exciting and curious to re-imagine traveling through an art exhibit as you would a natural landscape, where you come upon things and interpret them."

ONCE an aircraft-testing facility, the 16,000-square-foot exhibition space is now a compact simulation of Los Angeles. On the west side is a beach, doing double duty as a playground for kids and as a forum for exploring issues surrounding the Malibu waterfront. To the east, a desert and campfire area are set up for lectures. Up north are mountains — a grotto for film projections. In the center is the "city" itself: a multiuse area with a skate ramp, stage, reading room and picnic area.

"This is all about Los Angeles," said Haeg, 35. "It's hyper site-specific in the sense that we want to know who are the people who live here and what is our exact ecology and what is our community. People from other states and countries can come and see this, but it's made for the people who live here."

Recognizing that the worlds of academia and art are often uninviting to the public, Haeg and Perrin have designed the space to welcome everyone. They're leaving a few spaces in the exhibition open to walk-ins who want to be a part of the show. In the picnic area, they're using tables that are connected "family style," so that people who might

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URBAN RANGERS: Sara Daleiden, left, Jenny Price, Emily Scott and Therese Kelly lead exhibition tours and campfire talks.

ordinarily sit separately are encouraged to communicate and, it is hoped, share ideas with one another.

"It's really supposed to be a dialogue. It's not a show that talks at you, but one that you actively participate in," Haeg said.

"We really want people to come here and have lunch every day or to use this as a living room, to use this as a place to meet friends and hang out and watch videos, to compensate for the lack of public space that we have in Los Angeles for this kind of thing."

What will happen over the course of the exhibition neither Haeg nor Perrin knows. That's why they're calling it an experiment. And that's exactly what they like about it.

"There are 100 of these guys. There's this massive space. There are six weeks. In that time, you put them in, you shake it up and see what happens," Haeg said.

"The whole point of this is to create an experiment like a petri dish in which something grows that you weren't even aware of or knew could grow there."