

ACME.

2939 DENBY AVE  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90039  
T 323.741.0330 F 323.741.0442  
WWW.ACMELOSANGELES.COM

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# Los Angeles Times

## What to see in L.A. galleries: Jennifer Steinkamp

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Jennifer Steinkamp inaugurates the main space of ACME.'s new location in Frogtown with "Still-Life."

The computer-generated animation is a doozy. Projected onto a movie-screen-size wall (so that the image's perimeter exactly matches that of the wall), the L.A. artist's virtuoso display of computer wizardry transforms the darkened chamber into a trip both heady and pleasurable. As fun to experience as it is fascinating to contemplate, her mesmerizing work puts a feminist spin on a great Southern California tradition: art so smart that it doesn't have to wear its brains on its sleeve.

The solid wall appears to dissolve as Steinkamp makes it seem as if we're staring off into deep space. That illusion is radical. Rather than bashing through the so-called fourth wall of theater to aggressively occupy the same space that viewers do, "Still-Life" opens onto infinity. The silent nothingness of the void forms the background of Steinkamp's existential meditation on time's passage and life's transience.

In the foreground, supersized fruits, blossoms and sprigs from female fruit-bearing plants bounce around the picture plane. Their colors are luscious. Their contours crisp. And they have been rendered so that there is no way to mistake them for the real thing.

Wonderfully unnatural, Steinkamp's apples, oranges, pears, plums and peaches resemble the offspring of an old-fashioned slot machine's whirling symbols and a galaxy on the fritz. Playfully apocalyptic, they move in the manner of lethargic atoms.

Every 50 seconds or so, the image freezes.

Then, all of the fruits, flowers and leaves reverse course, traveling back the way they came.

The paths made by Steinkamp's gravity-defying objects recall gorgeously woven lace, its delicate shapes even more beautiful in four dimensions. The repetition is soothing. It generates serenity.

As accessible as a screensaver, "Still-Life" is a Light and Space installation for the digital age. Terrifically unpretentious, it leaves visitors with big questions about everything. That's daunting and inspiring.

*ACME., 2939 Denby Ave., Los Angeles. Through Jan. 7; closed Sundays and Mondays. (323) 741-0330, [www.acmelosangeles.com](http://www.acmelosangeles.com)*