It's jarring and disorienting. A merging of diverse stimuli.

By LIS BENSLEY

At first glance, the austere, highly personal and seductive drawings of Wes Mills seem strange counterpoints to Colette Hosmer's installation of cast rhesus monkey skulls that confronts rather than beckons. And how does their work fit beside Susan Wing's three-dimensional filament drawings that push our perceptions of time and space? Or with the delicate drawings of Marsha Skinner that dance between movement and stillness, color and light? The mutable imagery of Virginia Dehn's exploration of color against line, pattern and texture?

Well, maybe none of the work of these six New Mexico artists suit when taken as a whole. It seems jarring and disorienting, this merging of such diverse sensual stimuli. Until you consider where the work takes you, how it invites you to question your inner responses and perceptions. How it might just shake you — just a little — into shifting your own perspectives.

Opening today at the Museum of Fine Arts is a haunting and provocative new Alcove Show, featuring the work of Mills, Hosmer, Skinner, Wing, Diaz and Dehn. The show opens with an artist's reception from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and runs through July 2.

“Each artist engages the viewer in a personal dialogue and confirms the idea that artists cause us to question our own inner responses and perceptions, even if they are not what the artist intended,” wrote the show’s curator Sandra D’Emilio in the accompanying brochure.

“Like an anchor. It’s solid and all this chaos is happening around it.” And how can this mark be an anchor? Simply because of the presence of chaos which, in itself, makes the mark valid.

Anima, 1994 by Wes Mills

Tina Murdoch

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Steina Vasulka, a form of visual expression that seemed to suit her well. "I picked up a camera, and to me it was a natural progression: "You hold the violin like this, and you hold a camera like this," she said, crooking her arm in front of her face in a motion she uses for both objects. "I use the camera as an instrument. It's the only medium available to me; if it wasn't for video, I wouldn't be a visual artist. As I've gotten involved with it, from my perspective as a former musician, there's no other medium where you can compare sound and images in the same way." In Pyrglyphs, the sounds of which originate from activities in Joyce's shop — are not organized into tonal scales, yet the structure of the piece is more musical than visual, Vasulka said. "It is very visual, but I rely on the music for the content, to configure it together." Creating Pyrglyphs was an evolution, and an enjoyable experience, Vasulka said. "I came in to take sort of distant pictures, and then I got thrown into the intricacies of blacksmithing and fire, and then to have Tom thrown into it and make it into a collaboration — it was a complete process. "Nothing was ever planned, and at the same time, casual things became sort of monumental adventures." Vasulka's other video/audio installations at the CCA include Borealis, composed of close-up and manipulated images and sounds of the turbulent waters of Iceland's rivers, streams and surrounding ocean. Machine Vision was produced using rotating cameras in a closed-circuit environment. ("Don't say anything else about that one," Vasulka said conspiratorially.) The third smaller installation is a collage of her video art from various time periods.

Connie Alderman, continued from Page 26 to follow their heart's desire. "I say break the mold," she said. "When I started doing this at 48 there was a lot of opposition. My mother wanted me to fit a mold. My ex-husband wanted me to fit a mold. I think people are threatened by non-conformity. I just decided I didn't want to live my life for other people anymore. And I'm doing what I want to do, which makes me very happy."