

20:20 VISION

A SCAN ON TOMORROW IS GENERATED BY THE ANT FARM
AND SPONSORED BY THE CONTEMPORARY ARTS MUSEUM,
HOUSTON, TEXAS. FUNDS GRANTED BY THE NEA

EXHIBITS

UTOPIA OR MYOPIA?

By PETER C. PAPADEMETRIOU

Houston's stainless steel parallelogram Contemporary Arts Museum was recent witness to the opening of a show jointly sponsored under a \$20,000 grant from the CAM and the National Endowment for the Arts. Entitled "20:20 Vision" it is an assemblage of images, simulations, actual objects and models billed as a "look at tomorrow."

The show created by Ant Farm of San Francisco is less a vision of things to come than a fairly loosely structured retrospective of Ant Farm itself and the American Dream since 1950. For those interested in the former, the best single piece in "20:20 Vision" is the catalogue (although posters, other books, and yes, even T-shirts are there for sale). For those interested in the latter, the framed collages of various themes seen in the show are clever, occasionally enlightening in their pointed puns and representative of the Farm's primary accomplishment: a slick personal style of image-making in graphic media.

"20:20 Vision" is not meant for a "professional" audience however and was designed to serve the purpose of Houston's CAM: to bring the avant garde to the general public. One can perhaps thus justify the absence of an intellectual framework for the content of what is shown, but some of "20:20 Vision" is downright campy or bizarre. For example, close examination of the model for "Kohoutek-Doll House of the Future" discloses a scenario where an all-female colony of Barbi Dolls is being raised as a food supply for giant ants, the true evolutionary winners. Freakout!! Ant Farm really got into Them when it appeared at the local drive-in around 1956 and never forgot it.

While avant garde and far-out funky are not necessarily the same The FORUM's Houston correspondent Peter Papademetriou reports that "20:20 Vision," whose themes and images are dominated by the myths of post-War - automotive Dream Car styling, brought back fond pre-Energy Crisis memories of his own first car, a straight-8 1949 Buick Special. The Ant Farm show is entertaining primarily because it brings us the future the way it really was.