

MARIE  
THIBEAULT,

## LEIGH SALGADO

The show ends tomorrow and it's in Whittier, but the artist, Marie Thibeault, is one of the Southland's best painters — and this is some of her finest work yet. It borders on that odd new genre of landscape that's emerged from digital technology, conflating architectural rendering, fantasy projection, bucolic and urban landscape space, complex drawing and high-calorie color (among other things), but Thibeault's rich, almost ab-ex painterliness and insistence on covering every inch of surface imbues it not only with a visual sumptuousness but also an urgency, a tempest-tossed sense of wrack and ruin. No surprise to find that these angly, jangly images, part marsh and part woodpile, are based on photos taken in and around New Orleans in the aftermath of Katrina. We've seen plenty of post-disaster documents, but Thibeault renders the pathos — as well as the terror — a palpable sensation.

Leigh Salgado's work may spring from less fraught sources, but is hardly less intricate, opulent or provocative. Indeed, sex is a driving force in Salgado's paper pieces; with all the tattoo-like drawing, cutting and burning involved, can kissing and fondling be far behind? Salgado visits such corporeal insults upon sheets of durable paper, as often as not causing patterns of perforation and large areas of mesh to envelop her inky, bulbous images in perverse finery. Actual body parts are few and far between and rather abstracted when they do appear; it's some of the strangest yet most effective piece-of-art-as-piece-of-ass stuff being done today. If Thibeault demonstrates that abstraction can touch our hearts, Salgado shows it can touch us elsewhere as well. *Marie Thibeault at Greenleaf Gallery, Whittier College, 13406 Philadelphia St., Whittier, Mon.–Fri., 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; thru March 2. (562) 907-4255. Leigh Salgado at Patricia Correia/Faufitown Projects, 2525 Michigan Ave. No. E2, Santa Monica, Tues.–Sat., 11 a.m.–6 p.m.; thru March 3. (310) 264-1760.*

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*Leigh Salgado,  
The Other Side of Infinity (2006)*

—Peter Frank