

Parked cars can produce a lot of art

By LILLIAN SALAZAR LEOPOLD
Staff Writer

CHULA VISTA — For a few short hours, Southwestern College students saw red, and white, and black, and blue as they flooded the school's parking lots with a color wheel of cars recently.

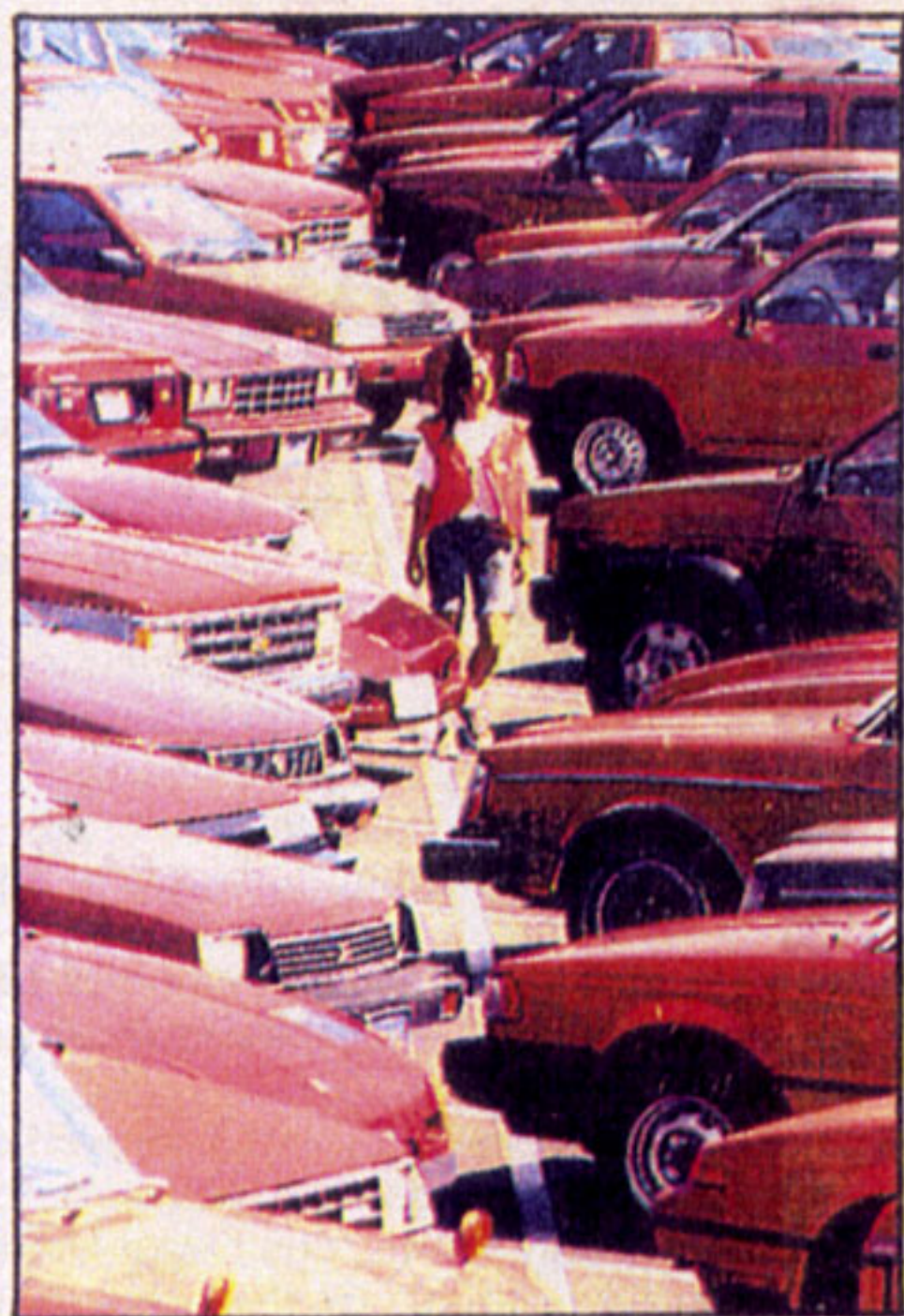
Parking turned into a cooperative process, rather than a competitive one, as the 3,500 or so commuter students participated in Carpark, an art project to kickoff Insite '94 — a binational art display.

"Cars are a fundamental feature of the educational experience at Southwestern, but one that goes largely unnoticed," said Steven Matheson, one of three artists coordinating the artwork.

"The objective is to transform the parking lots from an annoyance into something fun — a place full of aesthetic possibility."

As the event began to unfold shortly before 7 a.m. last Wednesday, the artists wondered if their weeks of color census-taking, coordinating volunteers and plastering fliers on cars and campus buildings would pay off.

See Cars on Page E-5



Union-Tribune / SCOTT LINNETT

Auto art: *Nina Katchadourian, one of the artists involved in the Carpark project at Southwestern College, walks among a row of cars organized by color.*

THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

• TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1994

Cars

Campus parking lot is artists' canvas

Continued from E-1

"There's a certain point where you're going to see if it works or not," said artist Nina Katchadourian.

That point came around 9 a.m., when rush-hour parkers successfully made it to designated parking lots.

"This is art on a grand scale — an untried scale," Katchadourian said. "It was the three artists, 50 additional volunteers plus every driver who decided to participate."

So this was not only art, but also a social experiment, the artists said.

"This is about peoples' willingness to participate," Matheson said. "For most students, this was quite an enjoyable break."

There appeared to be a high participation rate. And even if one lone white car stood among a sea of red cars, that was OK with the artists.

"The visual effect will be a record of what happens," said artist Mark

Tribe. "This is a social experiment. If people don't want to take part we'll be able to see it in vivid color."

Students knew where they were going to park when the artists placed color-coded maps on their windshields a few days before. But even with fliers everywhere, there were some students who didn't know what all the lines were about.

"It seemed cool," said Patty Alvarez. "I followed along but I didn't know why they were doing this."

Bertha Cabral said that even if you wanted to park in a different lot, guides in orange vests were directing you to the "correct" lot.

The lines into the most popular parking lot — the one for white cars — made Laura Del Valle late for class. But her teacher was cool about it, she said.

"It was fun, exciting, and I feel patriotic for participating," Del Valle said. "I feel kind of proud to be part of it."

Student Stephan Cureton had a different observation.

"The hard part will be finding my truck in all that red," Cureton said.

At least it was good, clean art, said Kierre Daniels.

"Jesse Helms shouldn't have a problem with it," Daniels said of the conservative North Carolina sena-

tor who has been a frequent critic of the arts.

Carpark was the first of 74 art installations that will span from the playas of Tijuana to Escondido as part of inSITE94. The exhibitions, which include sponsorship from nearly every museum in San Diego, took the Installation Gallery two years to coordinate and will result in about \$3 million worth of art on display, said Barbara Metz, spokeswoman for inSITE94.

"In a time when there are fewer

dollars going to the arts, you are going to see museums and artists working together as a way to display art," Metz said.

Video and photographs were shot before, during and after Carpark. That documentation, along with other materials gathered in the process, will be on display at the Southwestern College Art Gallery from Sept. 28 through Oct. 30.

Other art exhibitions that are part of inSITE94 are expected to open Sept. 23.