

A man with a friendly expression, wearing a white lab coat over a dark suit and a striped tie, stands in the center of a narrow hallway. The hallway is lined with tall wooden shelves filled with numerous manila file folders, each with a small colored tab. The lighting is warm and focused on the man, creating a professional yet approachable atmosphere.

# west

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## The Man Who's Lifted a Thousand Faces

Nobody's erased more wrinkles  
or smoothed more lines.  
And what he knows about beauty  
would surprise you.

The Valley's Eternal Christmas : Chairs That Suit Us : Aztec Gods in Blythe





## Fwy Wall Extraction

**Photograph by Ruben Ochoa**

2006

Ochoa's Wall Extraction can be viewed until Jan. 21 on the eastbound 10 Freeway under the Soto and Marengo streets overpass.

Ruben Ochoa's photograph is as hard to explain as a René Magritte painting. In fact, it's a lot like Magritte's "The Human Condition," in which a landscape painting on an easel in front of a window fills in the view outside that the canvas blocks. Like Magritte's painting of a painting, the Ochoa work seen here is a photograph of a photograph.

It's an installation view documenting the piece Ochoa created on the 10 Freeway. Here's how it was done: Ochoa got permission from Caltrans to install his work on a retaining wall. Next he went through photographs he'd taken at freeway construction sites or offramps where there was no wall

to block the adjacent view of nature. Selecting pictures that fit with the flora behind the site on the 10, he then combined them digitally into a hypothetical view of what one might see were the freeway wall breached. The result was printed on strips of vinyl wallpaper that were seamlessly overlapped to create the illusion you see here.

Magritte seems the right frame of reference for this piece because, like some of the more recent work in "Magritte and Contemporary Art," now at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Ochoa's massive "intervention" (as he calls it) is a gesture of pure Conceptualism.