



## Water & power

### 'Don't Blow It/A Rising Tide' turns One Colorado into one of Pasadena's edgiest exhibits

By [Carl Kozlowski](#) 12/23/2009

Over the next few days, the husband-wife artist team of Alex Kritselis and Joey Forsyte will be reacquainting people with Mother Earth through an extravagant array of images in a dazzling new video project at the One Colorado Courtyard.



With the exhibit "Don't Blow It/A Rising Tide," the dynamic duo has utilized the latest video technology to present a timeless message about Earth's beauty and the need to preserve it.

Using a Canon EOS 5-D Mark II or 7-D high-definition digital camera on shoots around the planet, as well as digital projection equipment provided by the New Media Center at Pasadena City College (where Kritselis is the dean of the college's Visual Arts and Media Studies Division), the pair has created a visual backdrop in the courtyard that gives a hauntingly enjoyable new life to the stately structure of the long-shuttered former Gordon Biersch restaurant and brewery.

The images will change a few times before the exhibit's end on Jan. 3, but the initial video that launched the night of Dec. 17 features a combination of under-water footage of people swimming and what appears to be a vast seascape that is actually footage of a massive aquarium at Long Beach's Aquarium of the Pacific. The

combined footage, displayed on 13 glass doors and windows of the Biersch building through 13 projectors, is designed to make viewers consider rising ocean water, making a subtle allusion to melting ice caps and global warming.

“We’re both interested in what’s happening with the environment,” says Forsyte, who is a producer, director and director of photography. “We know people who went with the Algalita Foundation on a trip to the middle of the ocean where the Pacific Gyre exists as a mass of plastic trash twice the size of Texas, and a friend showed me a bottle of water from there. It floored me and gave me the idea to focus on water first with this. The ideas happened in a random, organic kind of way. It also ties in with the rising ocean water issue, and we hope it ties together the two themes in a way that isn’t too didactic.”

Kritselis has created similar public-art video installations in the past, particularly by projecting footage on the 200-foot walls of the PCC administration building on Pasadena Artnights. But he and Forsyte — who met seven years ago and have been married for nearly three years — decided to make this exhibit their first collaboration after strolling through Old Pasadena a few months ago.

“We both love architecture and movies, and the idea was that One Colorado is at the heart and center of Pasadena,” says Kritselis, a native of Greece who grew up inspired by the view of the Parthenon from his home. “We love public art and how democratic it is, and exposing both people who love the arts and those who don’t visit museums to art by putting it in the heart of the town is very exciting for us. We contacted the Old Pasadena Management Association to ask about it, they opened the door for us and we tried to make it festive and fun.”

The installation’s second video should be launching this week, featuring what appear to be two everyday candles. But when Kritselis’ and Forsyte’s enormous heads slowly appear to blow them out in a reference to the air we breathe and the energy we use as humans, the tapers suddenly look dwarfed by giants.

In addition to adding new videos weekly, the pair will improvise like jazz musicians by playing with different combinations of imagery within each week. Repeat visitors can expect to see completely different presentations throughout the installation, viewable from sunset to 1 a.m. daily through Jan. 3. There is even a special Rose Parade-related video, likely to feature living roses, in the works.

“If people get the message, that’s wonderful, but art is sort of my religion and it connects me to myself and artists from other centuries,” says Forsyte. “It creates an emotional side for myself. Public art like this exhibit creates community, and when you’re new to a sight you can start a conversation with a stranger. That’s a wonderful thing, and we’re proud to contribute to that.”

*“Don’t Blow It/A Rising Tide” runs through Jan. 3, Christmas and New Year’s Day included, from sunset to 1 a.m. daily. Videos will be shown at the courtyard and Smith Alley quadrants of One Colorado, the retail and restaurant complex on Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena bounded by Fair Oaks Avenue, Union Street and DeLacey Avenue; and at 39, 35 and 29 N. Fair Oaks Ave. Free. Visit [onecolorado.com](http://onecolorado.com).*