

# WHAT'S HAPPENING *IN THE* ARTS NOW

**BY ROB HEIDRICK** Austin made a name for itself long ago as a destination for emerging talent in music, film, and visual arts, and many of the people that have kept this reputation alive continue to innovate and infuse fresh energy into the arts community. These creative forces—collectives, individual artists, nonprofits, and arts enthusiasts in general—mutually inspire one another through various partnerships and exhibitions, all with the goal of maximizing exposure and appreciation for artistic innovation.



**OKAY MOUNTAIN** Situated in an unassuming gallery on East Cesar Chavez Street, the Okay Mountain collective is earning a reputation not only for its own art but also for exposing Austin to works from artists around the world. The organization, founded in 2006 by a group of 10 fellow artists, splits its time between creating and curating. The men of Okay Mountain discover new artists by word of mouth or online, often simply cold-calling them to invite them to display their work at the gallery. The gallery's new exhibition, *Paradise Has Relocated* by Sandy Carson, runs through November 21.

"You have to find people at the point in their careers when they're willing to take a risk," says Nathan Green, a founding member. Okay Mountain is also at that point, and the risks have paid off thus far. The collective's *Corner Store*, which debuted in Miami in 2009, transformed an art fair booth into a walk-in convenience store stocked with dozens of custom-made products for sale. The installation received multiple honors at the fair, including the viewer's choice award. The group's new video work, *Water, Water Everywhere So Let's All Have a Drink*, is on display at the Austin Museum of Art through mid November.

ABOVE: Okay Mountain's *Corner Store* project is stocked with colorfully named products including Diet Street Bites, Tantrum Cola and Hairy Chest Kit. The exhibition won the viewer's choice award at the Pulse Contemporary Art Fair in Miami in 2009.