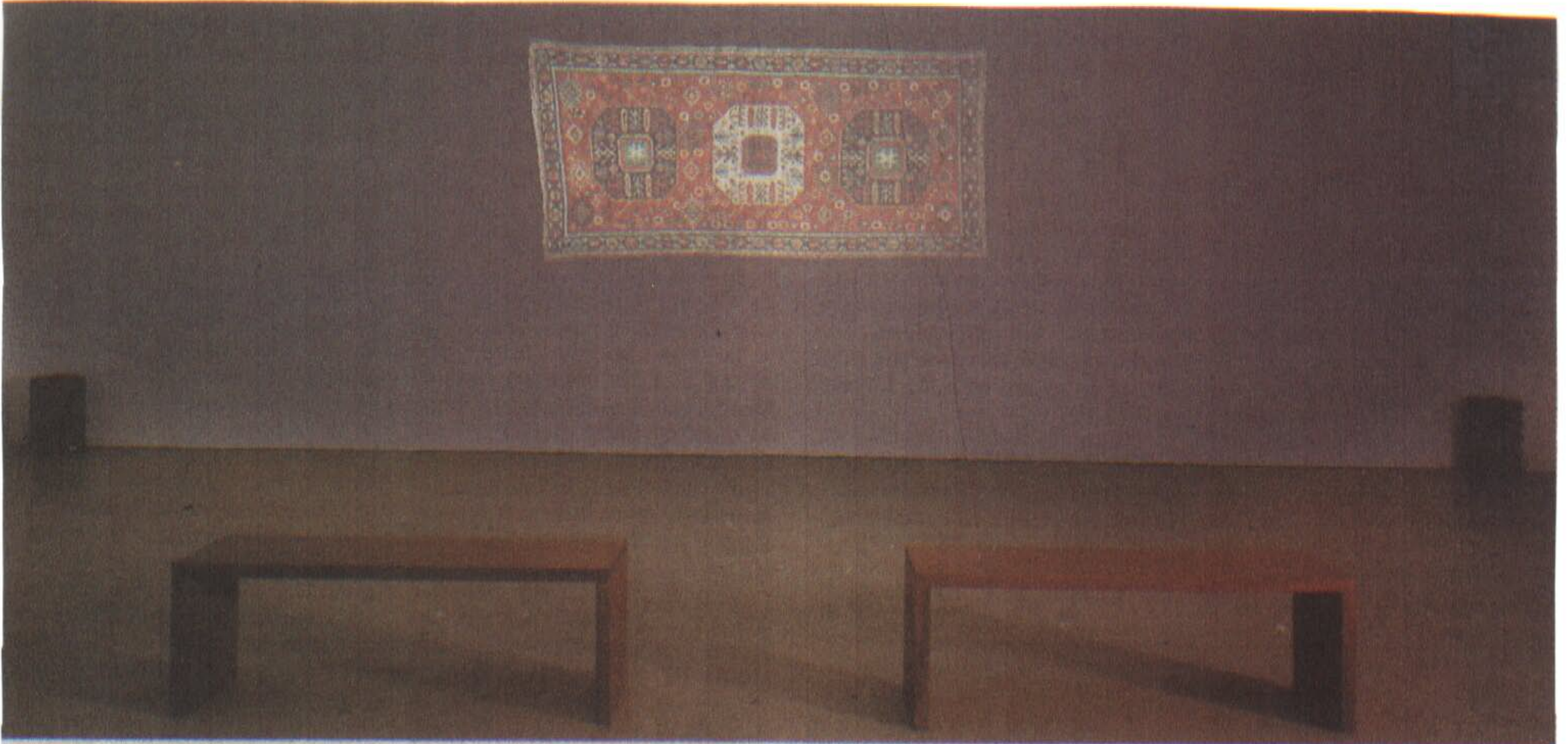


REGEN PROJECTS

Pagel, David, "Carpet's Magic Pulls at Emotions", Los Angeles Times, July 4, 2003, p. E21, ill.

Los Angeles Times



TAKING OFF: *Jeroen de Rijke and Willem de Rooij's wordless, slow-motion documentary, "The Point of Departure," captures the sensuous texture and stylized abstraction and color of a beautiful woven carpet.* JOSHUA M. WHITE

Carpet's magic pulls at emotions

By **DAVID PAGEL**
Special to The Times

Hollywood blockbusters as we now know them were born in the 1970s, which also was the heyday of structuralist filmmaking. Back then, formalist art films and commercial movies had so little in common that aficionados of the former spoke snobbishly of "the cinema" and scoffed at popular movies for being mindless spectacles engineered to make a profit.

Dutch artists **Jeroen de Rijke** (born in 1970) and **Willem de Rooij** (born in 1969) were too young to experience these different approaches to filmmaking the first time around. But they

are acutely aware of their influence, not to mention the changes that have taken place in art and film since then. At Regen Projects, the duo's new 26-minute movie and series of shorts could be the offspring of "Star Wars" and Stan Brakhage.

In the darkened main gallery, an old-fashioned projection booth housing a 35-millimeter projector takes viewers back to an era before DVDs and digital technology. On the opposite wall, De Rijke and De Rooij's film begins abstractly. Color and movement are all you see.

Proceeding slowly and steadily, the camera never rests. Eventually, blurry organic forms congeal. It seems as if the camera is traveling through a tunnel-like enclosure, perhaps a narrow canyon or cave.

After a few minutes, the perspective shifts. Now viewers are given a bird's-eye view of what appears to be a mature wheat field, over which a tornado seems to have passed, or through which a herd might have stampeded. Stalks are flattened every which way, forming chaotic patterns. Many of the stalks are golden yellow, but others are bright red, deep blue or earthy brown.

This part of the film is sharply focused, emphasizing the sensuous texture and three-dimensionality of every square inch. The camera eventually pulls back for its third and final pass. Now it's evident that De Rijke and De Rooij have been filming a beautifully woven carpet, first pushing the camera through its nap, then using the lens as if it were a microscope, and finally allowing the frame to be filled with the abstract patterns that have been woven into the rug.

This is the longest section of their movie, whose soundtrack provides just the right mix of trippy intrigue and meditative calm. Passing over the carpet, the camera follows rows and columns of stylized designs and geometric forms. The woven patterns lack the exactitude of mirror images; each was formed by the idiosyncratic twists and turns of its makers' hands. As filmed by De Rijke and De Rooij, the individual components of the carpet's overall pattern read like a mysterious storyboard.

Their wordless, slow-motion documentary concludes with a bit of digital manipulation. Spinning on one axis and then another, the rug floats off into deep space, like a planet that's pulled out from under your feet. As it disappears into nothingness, a pang of loss tugs at your heartstrings. The real magic of their flying carpet takes place not on screen, but in how it weaves its way into your emotions.

Regen Projects, 633 N. Almont Drive,
West Hollywood, (310) 276-6434, through
July 26. Closed Sundays and Mondays.