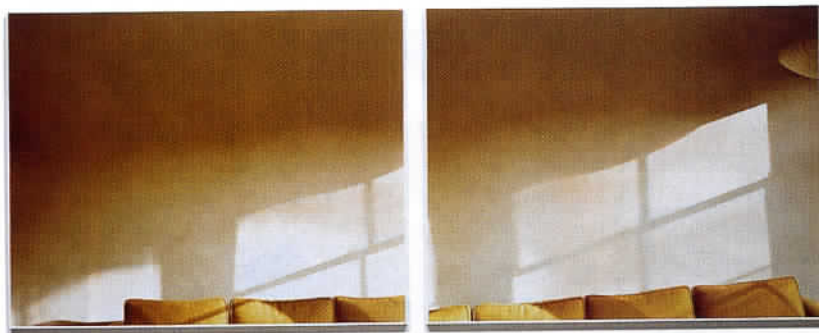




Top to bottom: *Ground* (95.6), 1995 (20"x17"). *AOT 4*, 2000 (diptych, 35"x90"). *Ground #13*, 1992-93 (Ektacolor print, 27"x30"). Far right: Barth photographed at home in Los Angeles. See Resources.



2. UTA BARTH

"My two most recent projects were photographed in my house, but not so much to document my environment or reveal a narrative about me particularly," says Uta Barth, who, for the record, lives in Los Angeles. For her "Nowhere Near" series, she shot a tree and telephone poles through her living-room window; "... And of Time" turns inward to the pumpkin-colored sofa and nondescript oatmeal carpet of the room itself. In the untitled diptychs and triptychs of these two bodies of work, the artist zooms in or pulls back, subtly shifts her frame, sharpens her focus or softens it to abstraction's hazy border. "I'm interested in photographing the thing that surrounds you constantly to the point that you no longer really see it," she says.

Depicting an otherwise banal scene over time is a concept at least as old as Monet's haystacks. Barth isn't, however, interested in the modulating qualities of sunlight per se. Taken individually, each of her images has a meditative beauty, but her primary concern is cerebral, not aesthetic. Especially in the triptychs, she emphasizes seeing as an act by installing one image apart from the other two. "The gap of blank wall, which is often as big as one of the pictures, reminds you that you're in a gallery," says Sheryl Conkelton, who curated a Barth survey that opened at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle and comes to the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston on May 12. "I'm trying to make you aware of looking," Barth explains, "rather than of what you're looking at."

