

ARTS & BOOKS

A LOOK AT HOW
U2'S SET WILL
CHANGE THE
ROSE BOWL.
POP, E15



HOT TIMES
ON CENTRAL
AVENUE AND
BEYOND
ART, E10



THE PHOTO FILE



STUDENT BARNIA: Curious Marguerite Bird regularly commutes to Santa Monica College from Hollywood on her bicycle.



PERFORMER: Kristina Wong has been without a car since her registration with a failed Mercedes caught fire on the San Diego Freeway.



WRITER: Vision impaired D.J. Waldie hasn't driven since 1985. He's in the Santa Ana Center's "Without a Car in the World" exhibition.

Auto-immune L.A.

BARNIA

The people in these Meyer's photographs are doing what they fight against: that automobile. They are living in L.A., without a car.

That's Linda Meyer's University photography professor art set a year ago to document the often ignored population. The resulting exhibition, "Without a Car in the World: The Car-Free Los Angeles: The Stories of Living in L.A.," runs through Dec. 12 at 18th Street Art Center in Santa Monica. It includes 161 portraits, some with more than 10 people, each paired with a quote about the joys and trials of living without a car.

"I broke the assumption in people without cars we have to have no choice," said Meyer at her Santa Monica apartment. "I wanted to show that there are professional people with artists, busy ones who take the bus."

Meyer chose Deborah to magazine editor and single mom Paula Ross, who swapped her two school-age children for driving lessons to return to their former occupations. Jeffrey Skoloff, a computer programmer, said that his co-workers "think" when they learn he doesn't have a car. And Jeff de Babin, assistant director of UCLA's Center for the Study of Women, a journal that has proved both excellent educators will be so a people.

Meyer, 44, came up with the project after



ARTIST: Melissa There is one of Linda Meyer's 100 subjects. "I wanted to show that there are professional people with serious busy lives who take the bus," the photographer says.

going car-free herself in January 2008 to save money. "I just made me feel more like I mean in a city," she said. "It makes me feel really independent."

Striving to reduce as many points of stress as possible, Meyer started with car-free friends and artists who work through environmental blogs. To find those for whom being car-free was not a choice,

she turned to the "grip" service of Craigslist, where people often advertise services. She also began approaching strangers on the bus. She had expected to be rejected but found that "people were sort of glad to talk about their experiences and make contacts about issues they had with the transit system," she said.

She got a grant from the California Council for the Humanities and initially planned to include about 80 people but soon realized that the story was much bigger. Through her subjects, she saw how transportation problems related across to resources and opportunities. One woman she interviewed, single student Jessica Ingalls, spends six hours a day on a series of buses to home, school and work because there are no alternatives through her South Central neighborhood.

By giving voice to such stories, the project is a form of advocacy. "Showing the need and asking the biggest question would be 'get out of my car,'" said Deborah Waldie, an art history professor at UCLA. She sees the work as an example of how art that seeks to raise awareness of environmental problems. "It's also part of a tradition of L.A. artists who are interested in environmentalism," she said. She cites Bonnie and Donald Huyber. But for Linda Meyer's project differs significantly from their work, which have aimed to influence car culture.

california@latimes.com

JACKET COPY

L.A. indies are tops on Twitter

These authors are gaining not in the publishing realm, but in attendance that Los Angeles is a highly literary city. A survey of 10 of the most popular independent bookstores on Twitter (four are based in Los Angeles).

A recent check showed Booklight Books with 1,322 followers, Downtown Book Shop with 1,230 and independent 24th Street Books in downtown Los Angeles with 1,181. "Oh, we know that by the time you read this, those numbers may have changed dramatically — such are the vagaries of writing about an ever-changing medium such as Twitter in print — but you get the idea."



LOCALS: Book Shop is one of four independent bookstores in Twitter's top 10.

We're not better in the top 10 indie bookstores on the Twitter block, though, that place is marked by Phoenix, the independent Portland, Ore.-based bookstore that went online early and in a big way. Powell's biggest Portland online presence is reflected in its 2,842 followers. It's a close second.

The second-most popular bookstore is Twittered Down in Denver (2,122 followers), the only Twitter bookstore on the list. Second Book Store in Cambridge, Mass. (1,968) is the only Boston-area store. And Newpage in Austin, Texas, (1,816) is the lone representative for the Lone Star state. Two New York bookstores made the top 10 — Word and Book Culture, together totaling only about 1,200.

By all accounts the top L.A. bookstore in the top 10 list is Downtown Book Shop, with 8,008 followers, they still make an impressive number.

Impressively enough, if you look into the store's top 10 list, more New York and Boston bookstores figure prominently — such stores as New Bangor shop, Maryland, Minnesota and Vermont. But so much Los Angeles — it appears we have a healthy local bookstore that has already established themselves as being Twitter savvy.

Which means that next time you go to a meeting, don't turn off your cellphone, sorry about that. Instead, turn off your pager and feel free to Tweet, or long as you mention where you're at, and gently book, or promote, or follow the publisher or a publisher.



NEW PLAYERS: Powell's, L.A., shows up in a close by poll with 3,032 followers.