

BEAUTY #2
POWER PLANT
TORONTO

"Beauty #2" is a nod in the direction of local art, its mission to showcase the up-and-comers in the Toronto scene. Curator Philip Monk makes claims for a depraved cynicism, writing, "These (artists) have no intention of continuing to appropriate art's critique of the commodity... Who needs critique when we have Beavis and Butt-head? They disdain such moral seriousness altogether, and their irony lacks a political edge, perhaps in the realization of the posturing and ineffectiveness of most so-called political art." It's difficult to tell how Monk arrived at this curatorial position. At worst he's trying to prove he's hip to the 90s, while maintaining his position as a respected authority. At best he's trying to fabricate a new Canadian aesthetic of maverick, disaffected depravity. Unfortunately for Monk, he can't pull Sean Landers or Art Club 2000 out of thin air.

The strongest pieces are those that stay the farthest from any of the dead-end cynicism of postmodern, art-about-art, self-referentiality. Steve Reinke's short videos are perfectly packaged little gems. One is an analysis of Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* in terms of rectal sexual reference, another the "real" words from the first man on the moon (a dedication to the puppy he had as a child). The

drawings of G.B. Jones look like the soft-core pornographic doodles of a bored teenager. Their awkward album-cover-wannabe style sets up the lesbian content with wry sophistication. Jill Henderson's elegant paintings of handwritten lists make a fine collection. The "found object" aspect of the lists, combined with pretty-color painting decisions, make up an art strategy that remains refreshingly in the background and allows us to read the text as content.

John Mariott, whose major piece in the show is entitled *New York of the North Promenade*, says in the video accompanying the show, "The idea that art has to deal with the weight of the world is bizarre, especially when we've got the whole human spirit to deal with." The point is intelligent and eloquently made, and the best works here are those that take the matter as read. The problem is that the show is contextualized as if the non-seriousness of the art is its content. It's a tiresome endeavor that reeks of a pathetic Canadian striving to get into a "world class" maverick clique. (The first paragraph of Monk's essay contains the line, "... a problem of Toronto's has always been to be both too aware of and not hip enough to what is happening elsewhere.")



MICHAEL BUCKLAND, SPANK ME, HURT ME, LIKE ME, 1995.

Monk is just plain wrong when he says the work in "Beauty #2" is not political. In a video, artist Michael Buckland says that the "moral high ground has been co-opted by opportunists and sleaze balls." We already know it's all a game, and there's nothing really interesting anymore in simply watching people play it, so these artists try to deliver the goods. There is (and perhaps only someone younger than Philip Monk can really understand this) something downright affirming about using the images of media to talk about the human spirit. The artists in "Beauty #2" display a combination of cockiness, ironic criticality and media savvy that speaks of interesting potential for some funky, fun, and politically mature new work to come out of Toronto.

Sally McKay

The world of snide, jokey artwork

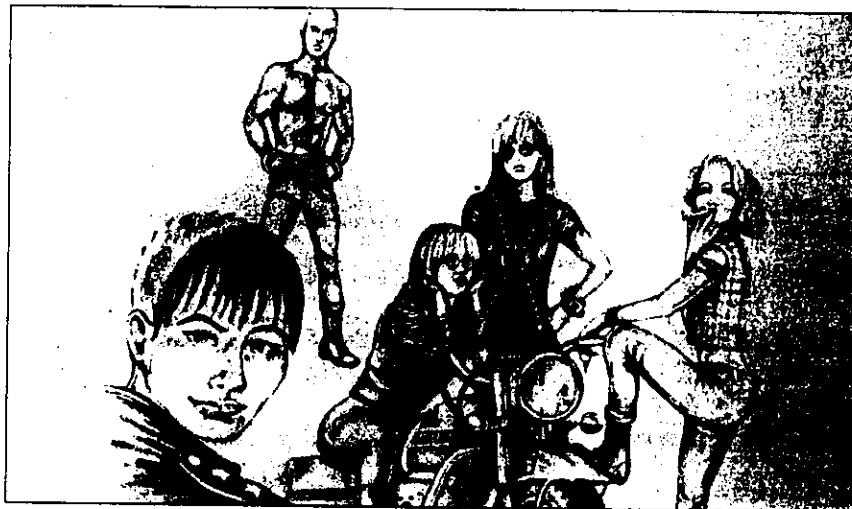
ART REVIEW / *The sleaze is not in the imagery of Beauty #2 at the Power Plant. It's in the air.*

BY JOHN BENTLEY MAYS
Visual Arts Critic
Toronto

WHILE a number of things can make you feel sleazy, a visit to a public art show isn't one of them, at least not ordinarily. That's what makes Beauty #2: New and Emerging Artists in Toronto, at the Power Plant, extraordinary. When my passage through this latest display of cutesy-poo art of the wink and giggle by 10 young artists was done — the Power Plant's already done Beauty #1, a Toronto showcase of the same sort — all I could think about was getting home and taking a shower to get the sleaze off.

Now any Metro cop who caught the word *sleaze* in the lead paragraph of this review, and has kept reading in hopes of finding another art show to bust, may now trash the paper, finish his/her double-double and doughnut, and get back on the street. Nothing at the Power Plant will disgust and offend you, unless you happen to be an art fan. There's not a single dirty picture here, or an image that's even the teensiest bit naughty.

G.B. Jones's lesbian parodies of the late Tom of Finland — the most famous hard-core gay cartoonist of our century — are finicky and pedantic, but certainly no threat to Community Values. Michael Buckland's installation of 276 signed celebrity photos of himself is merely so much harmless preening, while



G.B. Jones's All-Time Queens of the World: finicky and pedantic, but no threat to Community Values.

Slim Pickings' group of plastic inflatable crosses is nothing more than routine art-school blasphemy. And John Marriott's memorabilia — his product line features a T-shirt that reads: "They asked me to smash the system with art — all they got was this t-shirt" — is just adorably arty. (Now *here's* an artist with a future. Manufacturing CN

Tower souvenirs.)

The sleaze is not in the imagery. It's in the air — in the inescapable, oppressive atmosphere of exploitation and condescension that starts to slime you the minute you walk in the Power Plant's front door. The artists may not know much about art, but they sure know what they want: snug niches in the surprisingly lucrative contemporary market for snide, jokey artwork.

So they've made stuff that hits all the philistine hot buttons. It's sneering, where venerable art history is concerned, for which see Jill Henderson's blah paintings of shopping lists, burger-fixings lists, all kinds of lists. And for clown-faced and cute as all-get-out, there's nothing here to beat Marc Streifling's screaming-pink blowup photos (that he didn't take) of plastic toy trucks. And just for the jaded in-crowd of the art world, there are the photos of people playing dead by Janieta Eyre and Tom Hafkenschied, both ripping off New York artist Cindy Sherman's images and, apparently, each other. Almost everything here, by the way, is trying to look as fun and laid back as possible — not an easy job, given the artists' sweaty drive to mimic N.Y. and L.A. neo-Pop vulgarity down to the last yuk.

But me, oh my! There I go again, middle-aged baldy that I am, putting down a lot of neat kids for not being morally serious about art-making! That probably *is* mean, since they really don't want to be serious. As artist Michael Buckland puts it in a videotape accompanying the show, "the high moral ground has been colonized by sleaze-balls and opportunists. There's no room for us there."

Even without Buckland's mind-bogglingly dumb non sequitur, this videotape would be interesting. After a noncommittal introduction by Power Plant curator Philip Monk, we get a round-table discussion among the artists. During it, the usual enemies are sniped at — solid commitment to art, respect for its history and its contempo-

accompaniment of much tittering and snickering by the nine others. From this ignorant blab session, I gather none of these fun artists considered declining the invitation to show in a public gallery with a history of showing morally committed contemporary art.

But such eagerness to show off should not come as a big surprise among artists with an eye on what they imagine to be the Big Time. (They'll find out soon enough their art is yesterday's doggie din-dins.) What is mildly odd is that these artists were prepared to show when they suspected, with justification, that Philip Monk doesn't really back the work they do. Monk's cool manoeuvring, his reluctance to come out full-tilt for them, prompts some griping and whining by the artists on the tape — though, being manoeuvrers themselves, they should not be expected to decline a show at the Power Plant just because they were being used.

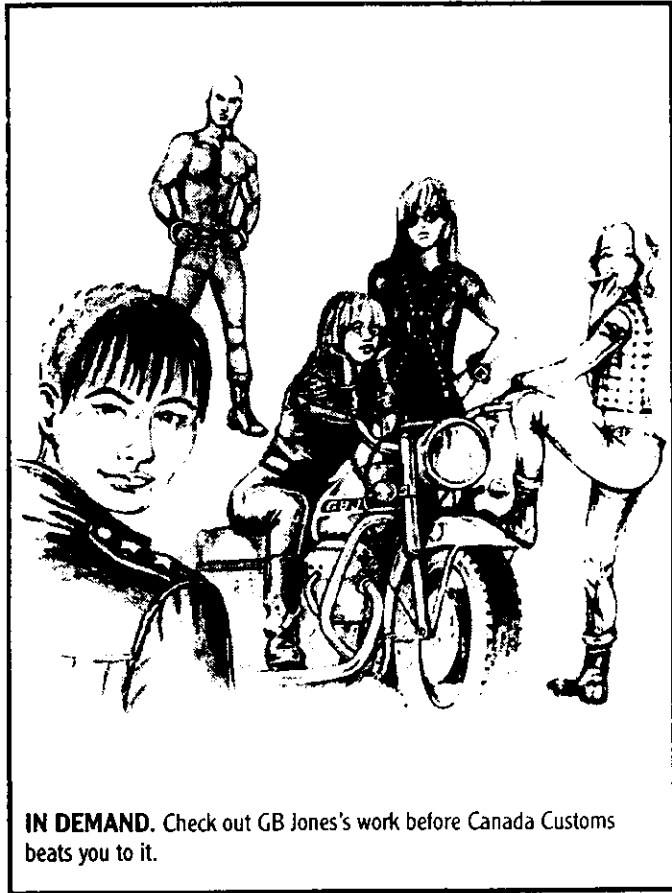
And are being used — or perhaps *had* is a better word.

In Philip Monk's 20-year performance as a critic and essayist, and 10 years as contemporary Canadian curator at the Art Gallery of Ontario, he has never once evinced a smidgen of interest in the kind of joke-art gathered into Beauty #2, and busied himself, with almost blinkered single-mindedness, with the most serious, conscious artwork being made today. What are we to make of Monk's organization of this show? I can come to only one conclusion: The artists who speak up on the videotape are right. It's a setup, a show Monk did for the summertime Harbourfront crowd but doesn't believe in, "a degenerate art exhibition," as one artist sarcastically puts it.

Though there ought to be a law, there isn't one against sleaze in the art world. But, then, we civilian art fans don't have arrest powers. Which is probably lucky for the 10 twinkly-eyed starlets in Beauty #2, and its curator, who'd all be in the slammer by nightfall, if we did. (Ah, for the days of the French revolutionary Terror, when critics could get artists killed for not lov-

The emergence of a baker

Power Plant presents the dream of the retiring psychoanalyst



IN DEMAND. Check out GB Jones's work before Canada Customs beats you to it.

Story by Liz Czach

the video Assplay has Steve Reinke musing over the possibility of inheriting his psychoanalyst's couch. The good doctor, you see, is retiring to become a baker.

Unfortunately, Reinke learns he's only been left the preliminary outline of a paper entitled Assplay: Anal Eroticism As Transformative Agent In Disney's Pinocchio.

It's a treat for anyone suffering from the feeling that gay subtexts are over-theorized. And it's one of a series of Reinke's videos showing at The

Power Plant through the summer.

"Fun, funky and shit-kicking" is how curator Philip Monk describes the works presented in Beauty #2. It's a follow up to last year's Naked State, that also showcased some of Toronto's young and happening artists.

Beauty is a mix of gay and straight, visual art and video. And the videos aren't shuffed off to some small screening room and forgotten. They're presented on monitors sprinkled throughout the gallery.

All but one feature Reinke's work. And they are but a small sampling of The Hundred Videos project, in which Reinke hopes to eventually make 100 works by the year 2001.

Another understated piece, Box, uses a clip of Oprah interviewing the father of mass murderer Jeffrey Dahmer. In this tape, Reinke translates, using superimposed text, the meaning behind the coded words of their conversation.

When Dahmer's father says Jeffrey was "very, very shy," the text reads: "Very, very, shy = queer."

Likewise, when Oprah says Jeffrey was "a little off," we read: "A little off = gay."

The video highlights the reading between the lines that the mass media require lesbians and gay men to do.

The lone monitor that ignores Reinke's work is where you'll find trailers for the films of GB Jones.

Two trailers run together, one

for the film The Yo-Yo Gang, the other for The Lollipop Generation. If you're looking for hot young girls suggestively sucking on lollipops, or rival girl gangs battling it out, you've come to the right place.

The voice over assures you that "it's racy," but you don't need extra assurances.

What's even racier is Jones's series of drawings, Subversive Lit and Prison Breakout.

The first three Subversive Lit drawings show young women in different cruising/reading scenarios in a public library — resulting in a trip to the washroom.


Jones's work is often compared to that of Tom of Finland. The reference is apt, but these come out of a deviant punk girl culture Jones can call her own.

The last drawing of the series is titled "Two 16-yr-old girls reading books seized at Canada Customs." Bookishness was never more appealing.

The other series of drawings, Prison Breakout, is exactly that. Different gals in various states of dress and undress battle it out amongst themselves and the guards.

Check these out before it's too late: Jones is already in a battle with Canada Customs, whose officials have seized her material at the border.

A matter of life imitating art?

Beauty #2.
S2, To Sun, Sep 3,
Power Plant,
231 Queen's Quay W.
(416) 973-1949.

G.B. Jones' Feminist Home Invasion

Mercer Union, Toronto
November 5 to December 22, 1994

JANE FARROW

This past November, Toronto's Mercer Union featured the pencil drawings of G.B. Jones, local punk-D.I.Y. queen and all-round iconoclast. Curated by Shonagh Adelman, the exhibit was the fifth in a series entitled "Girly Pictures" and also included Jones' 1992 Super-8 classic "The Yo Yo Gang."

Seeing G.B. Jones' work on display in an art gallery is like finding a well-thumbed *Penthouse* catalogued and shelved at the Library of Congress. The juxtaposition of her snarky, punker-dyke subjects against virginal white walls, varnished floors and full-spectrum lighting resonates with a charming ambivalence and absurdity.

Jones' series of pencil drawings feature female troublemakers committing acts of sexual misbehaviour. The first is a cruisy tattoo scene between surly biker babes and the second an SM prison fantasy between two inmates and a guard who gets fucked and beat on by her captives. G.B. Jones' drawings are not likely to be featured in *Ms.* magazine's arts and culture section in the next two or three hundred years.

To understand Jones' subjects and representational strategy one must first acknowledge her blatant appropriation of Tom of Finland's hyper-fetishized gay male



Tom of Finland, Untitled.

porn. Tom is the uncontested "father" of the modern homo-clone aesthetic. His realistic, cartoon-like representations of hard-bodied (and almost always) white men are widely available and displayed



Prison Breakout #5, graphite on paper, 13.75 x 10 inches, 1991

throughout the Western queer-boy stratosphere. His slick, stylized drawings embrace a coarse, hierarchical praxis of top and bottom, getting and giving. A host of horny cowboys, cops, sailors, leather boys, mechanics and construction workers suck and fuck their way to a heady climax in the boiler rooms, bars and workshops of a sweaty, macho-man's world.

Technically, G.B. Jones' renderings are a bit more crude and a little less exaggerated than Tom's. Her subject matter parallels his but with several significant departures. Jones' models are rarely authority figures — they are rebels and outcasts, female deviants (gay/bi/straight/who cares) playing out forbidden sexual roles on the margins. It is worth noting that the roles of top and bottom or butch and femme do not conflate with external norms of authority and power. In fact, these roles are inversely empowered in the role-playing depicted. For instance in the sequence involving the prison guard and the two inmates, it is the guard who gets fucked and beaten by the prisoners. This is a critical variance from Tom's drawings, which constantly reproduce and uphold conventional roles of

authority and hierarchy within sexual practice. Tom's cops and captains are, and always will be, compulsively "greek active."

The punker dykes of Jones' drawings are refugees from the established moral and gender order. Unlike Tom's subjects, they are not members of the military or police force and do not wield state-sponsored authority. G.B. Jones' pencil drawings are a radical reconfiguration of Tom of Finland's pornographic language of desire. Her out-

right hijacking of his craft "steals" the language of the "father," a feminist strategy she furthers by conducting a full-scale home invasion on the Great Mother (the iconized Andrea Dworkin, *et al.*) when she graphically depicts taboo sex and power roles between women.

Of course, radical sex does not necessarily equal radical politics — playing with power in the bedroom does not automatically entail sharing it in the kitchen or on the streets. And we also know that girls and boys are equally susceptible to this revolutionary lunch-bag let-down. Nevertheless, G.B. Jones' clever inversion of Tom of Finland's lusty gay male porn is radical and transgressive as a representational strategy. Jones' studly, dyke-punk outcasts will always be getting more bang for their sex-radical buck than Tom's father-fucking sailor boys rubbing each other's power-inscribed dicks on the poop deck.

Jane Farrow recently returned to Toronto after five years living in Vancouver and Halifax, and currently pursues two-thirds of a life as an aspiring, unimpeachable something.

The Yo-Yo Gang

Lesbian erotica used to be hard to find. Lesbian pornography used to be downright underground. But nowadays there's a veritable plethora of openly sexy dyke images to be found.

Like, what happened? Did it become trendy or something? Books, magazines, videos.... I started collecting them years ago as rare and exciting artifacts, proving that lesbians really do fuck. Now my house looks like a museum of dyke smut.

But of all the images we see in books, galleries and studios across the city, how many of them actually make us wet? I suppose it's a matter of taste, really. Whether you call dirty pictures art or pornography is up to the courts to decide. And what difference will it make? It's all just different words for pictures of tits. I don't know anything about art. I only know what turns my crank.

Mercer Union is currently showing works by GB Jones, that multi-talented artist, filmmaker, musician and co-founder of Toronto's homocore punk gay scene. Her drawings spoof Tom of Finland's famous fag portraits and depict dykes engaged in a number of fantasy-induced sexual exploits.

And they're hot. Okay, okay, I admit that my taste in art is based on its masturbation and self-gratification potential. I'd much rather look at a drawing of two perky-breasted motorcycle dykes lasciviously ogling a spiky-haired little school girl than a photograph of some fat bitch in a bath-



GB JONES. Tattoo Girls.

tub having sex with her cat. But hey, that's just me.

The gallery is also showing Jones's 1992 video *The Yo-Yo Gang*, an absolutely hilarious send-up of underground dyke gang culture.

Again I ask: How much low-budget San Francisco-influenced dyke cinema have you seen that you actually thought was clever? Not much? If you haven't seen it, it's worth the trip. In other words, Jones really is cool, she doesn't just think she is.

— Sonya Mills

The Yo-Yo Gang.

By GB Jones.

11am-6pm. Tue-Sat.

To Dec 22. Mercer Union.

439 King W.

(416) 977-1412.

Die Körperkunst des Wiener Aktionismus ist der Exportartikel Österreichs seit Klumt & Co. Nun kehrt sie 20 Jahre später und über den Umweg New York wieder ins Heimatland zurück. So spekulierete die Wiener Galerie Krinzinger auf deren neu-gewonnene Hipness in der Kunstwelt und brachte unter dem Titel „Körpernah“ symposiumsgestützt ihre Depot-Reste wieder in Umlauf. Durchsetzt vom kaum gebrochenen Hetero-Sexismus ganz alter Schule, ignorierte die zusammen mit dem Frankfurter Kunstverein geplante Schau die US-amerikanische Frischzellenkur der neuen Body Art durch *Women and Gender Studies* und gefiel sich statt dessen in einer patriotischen Pose des „Wir haben's ja schon immer gewußt“.

Im Unterschied zu „Körpernah“ sucht die ebenfalls in Wien Station machende Ausstellung „Oh boy, it's a girl!“ den gebrochenen Verbindungslinien vom Wiener Aktionismus zur aktuellen Body Art, zwischen „mein Körper gehört mir“ und Queer Nation nachzugehen. Schon der Titel annunziert, daß ein Brückenschlag zur US-amerikanischen Perspektive gewählt wurde, so daß sich Tanzkritiker Ulf Erdmann Ziegler als die Ausstellung in München Station machte an die letztjährige New Yorker Whitney-Biennale erinnert lüht. Zu Unrecht, zeigen sich doch neben nordamerikanischen Positionen auch europäische Entwicklungen wie bei Jürgen Klauke, Ugo Rondinone oder Christa Näher. Den als historisch vorgestellten Exponaten von Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export und Gina Pane werden aktuelle Arbeiten junger KünstlerInnen wie Lukas Duwenhögger, Elke Krystufek oder Inez van Lamsweerde gegenübergestellt. Neben bekannteren Positionen von Robert Güber, Mike Kelley oder Robert Longo finden sich in Wien eine aggressive auf die Wand geschmerte Comic-Collage von Nicole Lascman und die Transformation leidschwerer Tom-of-Finland-Zeichnungen in den lesbischen Kontext durch G.B. Jones. Obgleich die Ausstellung Feminismen in der Kunst nachgeht, finden sich neben heterosexuell weiblichen und lesbischen auch schwule Positionen oder Travestie.

Die Bandbreite der von Hedwig Savenhuber und Astrid Wege zusammengestellten Ausstellung reicht von individualistisch geprägten Selbst-Zerstörungen des Körpers, wie sie nach der Wiener Aktionismus prägte, bis zum eher spielerischen Umgang mit Geschlechterrollen. Eine feministische, somit gesellschaftliche Perspektive formuliert die Ausstellung nicht. Entsprechend bleiben politisch aggressive Formen, wie sie etwa die von New Yorker Künstlerinnen begründete Women's Action Coalition (WAC) in bezug auf militante Abtreibungsgegner vertritt, ausgespart. Da „Oh boy, it's a girl!“ die künstlerische Arbeit getrennt von politischen Opinions betrachtet, kann es auch zu einem Artikel in Österreichs maßgeblicher Tageszeitung kommen, in dem die „antiaktivistischen Qualitäten der Ausstellung“ besonders hervorgehoben werden.

Mit Bezug auf aktivistische Bewegungen zeichnet Manfred Hermes im Katalog die Schwulen-Politisierung im Deutschland der siebziger Jahre nach. „An erster Stelle steht Identitätspolitik. Alternative Infrastrukturen müssen aufgebaut, Öffentlichkeitsarbeit gegen staatliche Repressionen und § 175 eingeleitet, die Coming-Out-Problematik gestaltet, die eigene Geschichte erloscht und z.B. gekappte Fäden zu jener Schwulenzugbewegung aufgenommen werden, die von den Nazis zerschlagen wurde.“ Nicht zuletzt aufgrund des Films „Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt“, den Rosa von Praunheim 1970 fürs Kino und Fernsehen produziert hatte, entwickelte sich eine schwule Post-68er-Bewegung, die durch ein stets ambivalentes Verhältnis zur stark heterosexuell geprägten Linken gekennzeichnet

war. Mit dem Ausblick auf die Vielfalt US-amerikanischer Bewegungen oder einer Aneignung französischer Theorie wurden gegen Ende der siebziger Jahre Stilfragen relevanter, während andererseits die Aktionen in Loophyphen mündeten und die meisten Heftchen eingingen. In dem durch Katalog und Rahmenprogramm (Videos, Vorträge, Theorieperformance) noch erweiterten Ausstellungsangebot überschreitet die Arbeit „Leave A Message“ von Thomas Eggerer und Jochen Klein den Rahmen einer klassischen Gruppenschau. Im November letzten Jahres montierten die beiden Künstler an einem öffentlichen Toilettenhäuschen eine Tafel für Mitteilungen, so, wie sie sich auch im Innern der als Treffpunkt und sexueller Begegnungsort für Schwule benutzten Klos finden. Das Nachrichtenbrett wird nur „von Leuten rezipiert werden, die in der Lage sind, die verdeckten Bedeutungs- und Benutzungsebenen dieses Ortes im öffentlichen Raum wahrzunehmen“. Nun können auch alle Besucher des Kunstvereins auf der hochvergrößerten und etwas flau reproduzierten Tafel unter anderem Hinweise auf Partys oder Treffen im Freien zitieren. Um die Wiedergabe der Tafel gruppieren sich zahlreiche Zeitungsausschnitte und Kommentare. Denn vier Monate später entschied die neue rührige Stadtregierung von München, die als zu teuer erachteten Toiletten zu schließen oder in Probebereiche und kulturelle Stätten umzuwandeln. Man müchete nicht nur eine Million Mark für den Unterhalt der vielfältig genutzten öffentlichen Toiletten einsparen, sondern nun die Häuschen à 60 Quadratmeter durch die Firma Soft-Research vermarkten lassen: „Bewir die Häuser verrotten, nut-

Klappe dicht

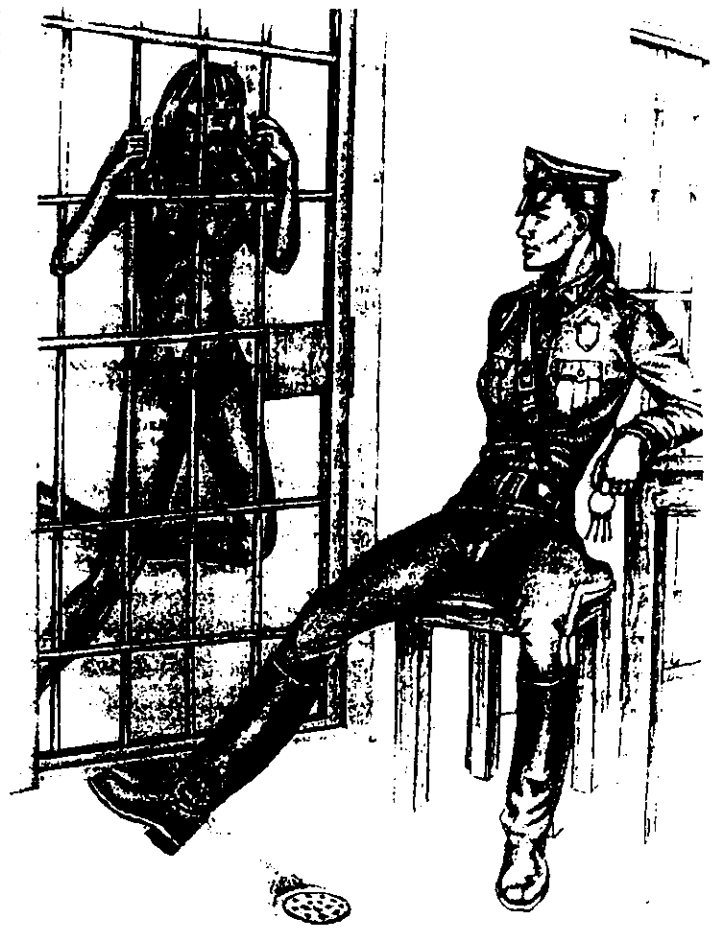
„Oh boy, it's a girl!“, eine Ausstellung über Gender- und Körperstrategien im Stadtstrom Wien ■ Von Jochen Becker

als gastronomische Toleranzzone in die Aufsicht des Ordnungsamtes gestellt.

Die beiden Künstler vergleichen die geplante Umwandlung mit der „Christianisierung heidnischer Kultstätten“. Schwule Lebensformen werden nur im Rahmen des Kulturellen verhandelt und herbei repressiv toleriert. Sie sehen im Beschluß einer sich „sozial aufgeschlossen und fortschrittlich“ gebenden Verwaltung nur den Hebel, die als Minderheiten ausgemachten Personen „in ihre Kulturpolitik“ zu integrieren, ohne jedoch Schwulen gesamtpolitische Mehrheiten zu verschaffen: „Der Vorgang der Absorption marginalisierter Positionen bedeutet lediglich eine Erweiterung des Territo-

riums nach außen und nicht etwa eine Aufgabe der kulturellen Definitionsmacht.“ Obgleich Thomas Eggerer und Jochen Klein ja ebenfalls mit der Nachrichtenwand das Innere nach außen kehren und – indem sie die Tafel in den Kunstverein hineinrücken – den Präsen-

tationsrahmen der Kultur wählen, stellen sie jedoch die Funktion der Klos als Klappe nicht in Frage. Das ganze Ausmaß der liberalisierten Geboten lenkt ganz auf sich. Bei einer Forderung im Nebenbereich SEB nach abgeschlossener aufrechten Austrittsöffnung



„G.B. Jones' Transformation von Tom of Finland in einen lesbischen Kontext“

von Jochen Becker

Fuck-Ökonomie

Mit Super-Models auf du und du: „Whip-Smart“, die zweite LP von Liz Phair

Pop-Feminismus ist eine Art paradiesischer Zustand, in dem sich alles sagen läßt: Wenn Liz Phair Sex und Rock 'n' Roll und die Freiheit aller bestmöglichen Stellungen besingt, warnt kein X auf dem Cover vor expliziten Lyrics der besagten Generation. Während MTV jedes Rap-Gemurmel flächendeckend zu piepst, sobald vom Fuck die Rede ist, darf der neue Freund von Phair wie ein Vulkan kstücken und es backward tun, damit beide dann dabei besser Fernsehen gucken können. Liebesgrüße aus Seattle, auch wenn das Ganze im Underground von Chicago abgeschickt wurde, wie der Spiegel unlängst entdeckt hat.

Was Phair mehr aus dem Bravo-Tagebuch einer Slacker-Amazone frech und blümchensexfrei zusammendichtet, wird anderer-

Smart“, in den restlichen Liedern denkt Liz Phair nur daran, trotz dem schnell es überall. Fuck-Ökonomie. Der Sex, den Phair beschreibt, ist in Wirklichkeit gar kein flüchtiges Vergnügen, sondern ein Quell der Inspiration. Und „Fuck and Run“ spiegelt nicht die ängstlichen Gefühle von grüngelben Teenager-Gerrits wider, nur die Dialektik eines bisher angeblich sprachlosen weiblichen Begehrens.

Ganz ohne Blumen geht es also nicht: Phair läßt die Frau raus, ohne ihre Unschuld verlieren zu müssen. Sie hüllt sich vielmehr in die Gleichgültigkeit von Bedeutungen, die in den derzeitigen Gender-Diskurs passen – das four-letter word heißt nun eben nicht mehr just love wie in Dylans Song, den Joan Baez gesungen

Liz Phair spielt nicht die Hochstranze der Frauenbewegung, sie ist eine relativ nüchterne, nur etwas komplizierte Songwriterin ein hübschen in der Tradition von Carole King und zugleich mit den Runaways sozialisiert. Dann wieder löst sich die ganze Überdachtigkeit im amerikanischen Post-Punk auf: ein wenig melodisch gekrümmt wie aus dem wüst grummelnden Bauch von Frank Black oder PJ Harvey heraus, als hysterische „Some Youth-Maschine“ oder wie exzentrische Minnelieder, die früher nur Kramer für Bongwater als „Power of Pussy“ geschrieben hat.

Jedenfalls war kein Style Council in Arbeit und nirgends ein „Headstart for Happiness“. Wichtig sausen die exzentrigen Gitarren des *White Trash* vorüber, und freundlich klingt die Stimme

von Liz Phair. Die zweite LP „Whip-Smart“ hat es auf sich. Liz Phair ist ausgesprochen „ungehörlich“, wie sie sich in den letzten Jahren in den New Yorker Musikszene hat. Bis 15. Oktober im Kunststam Wien

Zwischen den Rillen

Europa wurde wegen massiver Interviewnachfragen in Angela gestrichen. Anders als Liz Phair in Lovland oder Courtney Love und Hole rangiert Liz Phair bereits mit dem zweiten Album unter den Super-Models des *amerikanischen*

Wie die unsicher mahnerrönde Patricia Arquette im Film „True Romance“ oder die Österreicherin Elke Krystufek, die in Museenstritten „unstarblich“ scheint Phair als Gefühlskämpferin momentan die Lucke zwischen Strategie und Vergnügen aufzufüllen. Liz Phair redet nicht über ideologische Rätsel sondern in Gegensätzen. Die Rolle der konsequent im Bett agierenden Folkpunk-Diva bricht sich mit den ungläublich naiven Szenen aus „Support Systems“, wo Phair vom „man in the act“

■ Unterm Strich

Manche Leute haben eben Glück, wenn sie morgens in die Tickerliste treten. Denn was schöne Meldungen wie die folgende gibt es schließlich

SAN FRANCISCO'S NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT VOICE

SF WEEKLY

APRIL 6, 1994 ■ VOL. XIII, NO. 6 ■ FREE

Plastic Jesus

Artists take a thoughtful poke at religion in the kitschy "Tiny Shoes" (p. 19)

Cultural Hunger

"Stars of David" raises funds to feed souls in the former Yugoslavia (p. 27)

Sympathy for the devil

New Langton's "Tiny Shoes" treads lightly through a tragic religious landscape of sin and redemption

By Glen Helfand

KITCHEN AND BATH HAVE BEEN SHACKLED together for years. Look at all the Catholic visual excess pervading our hip lifestyles, Jesus, with nipple piercings, was a recent *SF Weekly* cover boy. "Southwestern" accessories — crucifix jewelry, Day of the Dead candy and luridly illustrated vintage candles — add tons of pious to scores of happening flats. These objects, imbued with splashes of color and the distant suffering of Third World believers, are a strange mixture of theology and fashion. Their appeal has much to do with putting faith in cheap representations, if not in religious practices.

Domestic versions of this "religious revival" map out a more troublesome territory: fit a place inhabited by satanic rituals and child abuse, the likes of Charles Manson, David Koresh, and televangelists Tammy Faye Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart. These are figures who revel in tabloid tragedy, sinning for the masses and suffering public humiliation. We laugh at their exploits and shudder at the hypocrisy of their position. Shamed by scandal if not martyred, these idols reappear to a forgiving, only slightly diminished flock.

Such strange juxtapositions materialize in other forms of religious paraphernalia, among them the salvation tables written and illustrated by the intantious Jack Chick. You know those little comics you find on the bus or accidentally sandwiched between back issues of *Raygun* and *Sassy* in the bathroom reading rack.

These dissonant books combine fundamentalist sentiment with poorly rendered *Adult* magazine-style graphics. They're crammed with page-turning references to sin, alcoholics, adulterers, family dysfunction and other forms of cheezy Americana. Translated into numerous languages, the Chick tracts are as popular with culture vultures as with actual disciples. Like televangelists, the pamphlets are kind of funny and more than a little frightening. "Nobody else can help you," threatens each miniature volume on its final page. Jesus is the way.

THIS PROPAGANDIST PUBLICATION SERVES AS the inspiration for *Tiny Shoes*, a playfully ecumenical group show at New Langton Arts. Titled after a Chick booklet in which an alcoholic father fails to provide footwear for his needy young son, the exhibition offers a melodramatic counterpoint to the pantheistic *Dead Sea Scrolls* spectacle currently at the de Young Museum. As curated by artist and writer D-I Alvarez, the Langton show places the quirky extremism of these pint-size religious narratives in the hands of creative types who, one could safely assume, live by oil-kilter, slightly devilish worldviews. It's a promising, perhaps even inspired idea, and *Tiny Shoes* — with walls painted sugary pastel shades and streams of Black Sabbath's *Paranoid* album washing into the gallery from a dark bathroom installation by Margaret Crane and Jon Winet — emerges as a rockin' Easter-season treat.

Amazingly, art-damaged fundamentalism has not produced the expected smothering stance. Sure, there are a few cynical sneers (which tend to be less success-

As political and religious thought become increasingly intertwined with Rush Limbaugh-like intolerance, as increasing numbers of aging boomers adopt some kind of spiritual practice, Alvarez's curatorial premise becomes all the more complex. An controversies of the Jesse Helms/Robert Mapplethorpe ilk, which this exhibition also references, seem like unevolved historical moments. So rather than poking easy fun at blind belief systems, most of these artists can't help but question their own relationship to Christian thought. (A booklet published in conjunction with the show continues to explore this idea, with strong, visceral prose works by Dodie Bellamy and Laurie Weeks.)

A few artists graft an element of queer identity, and



inherent sin status, onto the Chick format — and the results are tinged with an unexpected brand of secular ambiguity. Keith Mayerson contributes an impressively literal reworking of a Chick tract called *A Demon's Nightmare*. In a storyboard composition embellished with renderings of erect penises and noses, Mayerson seamlessly substitutes homosexuality for Christianity. Clever chapter and verse notations, like "Genet 3:16," appear at the bottom of image panels. Rather than overflowing with joy and freedom, the idealistic young hero's induction into gay lifestyle is fraught with the painful realism of slippery licks and AIDS doom. Nothing can save Mayerson's protagonist from his bitter fate. "If you are a homo," the how-to conclusion reads, "you'd better just face it."

An equally sticky message erupts from G.B. Jones' three uber-lesbian pencil drawings. These pieces, in which fresh-faced young women make "dyke and proud" testimonials (one features a hot tanka babe with a particularly large neck), combine civil rights concerns with paranoid fascist overtones. "Some have even been reported to be very active in women's lib organizations."



drawing proclaim, "and even hinted to be in high government positions." Jones serves a propagandistic component to all sides of the "homosexual agenda." Like Mayerson, she suggests that the fervent organization of gay — or any other — identity possesses its own fundamentalist features. After all, Mel White — ghostwriter to the religious right, including the Bakkers, Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson — just wrote an autobiography in which he comes out as a gay man. *Tiny Shoes* also features works which channel the spirit, if not the form, of Chick's trashy tracts. There are many entertaining uses of comic-book narratives, gothic lettering and demonology. Seen in context with actual Chick publications, Raymond Pettibon's cryptic, cartoonish drawings with text seem oddly morbid. In a more humorous vein, Crane and Winet contribute two pieces dealing with the devil's rackpot numbers, 666, and the upstanding citizens who ply them.

Church crafts are resurrected in Scott Hewicker's *Free Love Gift*, a strangely compelling felt banner. Inspired by an image from a booklet in which a rain of Christ's blood "cleanses" two morally souled children, Hewicker leaves a core of tear-shaped holes in the red fabric. (Mike Kelly, who utilizes similar materials, is loved on the show's announcement, but his work fails to materialize in the gallery.) In a similar Sunday-school vein, Michelle Rollman's *Velveten Rubba Attempts to Become Real Through the Magic of Prosthesis* conjures an Easter miracle with simple geometry class complexities.

Wheezy, *Tiny Shoes* treads lightly on unyieldable cracks in the ideological sidewalk. Fleas (er, hostfalls) through this blurry terrain of good and evil could easily slip into proselytizing to the converted — God knows we get enough of that already. Curator Alvarez, with this exhibition, seems guided by the advice of one Jack Chick sinner: "Let's go before this big nut starts preaching." ■

> *Tiny Shoes* continues through April 30 at New Langton Arts, 1216 Folsom, S.F.; call 620-5116



WORD FROM ON HIGH Margaret Crane (left) and Bob Winet are among those looking in Jack Chick for

**Tom of Finland and
G.B. Jones**
Daniel Buchholz



G. B. JONES, PRISON BREAK-
OUT, 1991. PENCIL ON PA-
PER.

Cologne claims to be one of the centers of gay culture. But clearly Daniel Buchholz, in his attempt to pick up on previously marginalized subject matter, is forced to fall back on historical material.

Tom of Finland may be both a sober observer and draughtsman of gay fantasies and realities, and at the same time a stimulus and driving force behind the appropriation of and the identification with those fantasies and realities. The exhibition of drawings by Tom of Finland and G.B. Jones in Buchholz's "Multipleladen," however, indicates either that the gallery owner has for years avoided looking around the Cologne scene, or that Cologne simply has no comparable creative or subculturally significant potential beyond its provincial context.

Provincialism is characterized by the maintenance and persistence of the familiar, the already known. This is not intended as a reproach to the provinces, because nothing ever happens there that would call for new, different or individual reactions.

And we still don't know whether persistence in artistic work contributes in part to its quality. And neither do we know what form this kind of persistence would have to assume if it were not to be seen as naive reverie or retreat from the world. This problem could only be resolved by a lively debate about the concrete case. But debates of that kind don't happen in Cologne any more.

"COMING TO POWER"—Many first-wave feminist artists of the early seventies made sexually explicit art as a means of empowerment. Several landmark examples are on view here, most notably Lynda Benglis's daring double-headed dildos cast in polished silver, and Nancy Spero's joyous paintings of women dancing with phalluses. Nancy Grossman's fiercely fetishistic leather heads seem motivated by existential issues rather than sexual ones. The exhibition also features the work of a new generation of artists, including G. B. Jones, Zoe Leonard, and Nicole Eisenman. A number of these recent works feature lesbian themes, which are several steps behind male homoerotic art in gaining mainstream exposure. The real accomplishment of this show is that it brings together two generations of women who have a lot in common but don't seem to know one another. Through June 12. (Zwirner, 43-Greene St.)

R

人作家および関連のテーマを扱う
オルタナティブ・ミュージアム・
スペースでは、四十六名の作家に
よる「ナショナル・ショウケース」

展が開催された。レウエルは高く、
社会的なテーマが多かったが、と
くにY・ナガサキのエイズを扱っ
た「否定しない」やニコラス・ア
ーバツキーのカツリンを使ったイ
ンスタレーション「アルテリア・
マグナ」などが目についた

ファイチチュア画廊では「あまり
にも多くの肌まつわるトラブル」
と題するグループ展が開かれ、ま
だ画廊がついていない五人の作家
はセックスや性についてをテーマ
に発表した。「なぜ、またセックス
か？」と聞くと、「セックスで階級、
人種、性別の構造が壊され、理性
を越える。また身体的にも意味が
あるから」という。

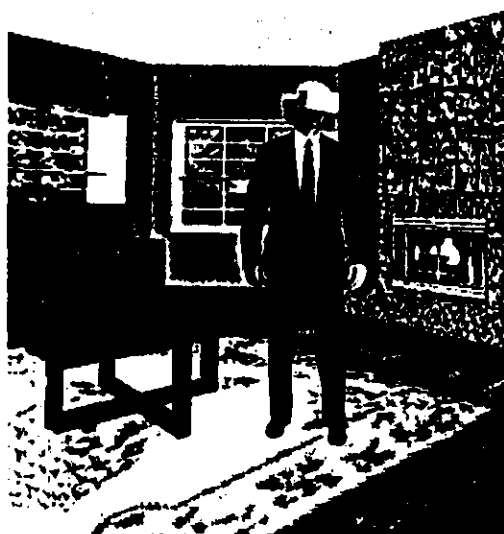
そのひとりのニューヨーク在住
の赤坂慎一郎は、これがニューヨ
ーク・デビューである。大きな画
面はのびのびとし、ホップ・アー
トの影響が見えるが、描くことで

セックスやエロティシズムをより
理解しようとしているように思え
た(七月八日-八月七日)。

ケンジ・フジタの「ウォール・
フラワーズ」と題された、ルーリ
ング・オーガスティン画廊での四
点も、以前とは違いわずかな要素
が風通しよく結びつけられていて、
この人も東洋の美意識をもつてい
るなど初めて感じた。

今夏の努力賞は「スルー・ザ・
ルッキング・グラス」と題された、
ヴァーチュアル・リアリティを探
究する作家のグループ展であろう。
作品はかなり製作費がかさむため
まだ実験段階だが、「アート・ルー
ム」と呼ばれる部屋で、ふたりず
つでヘルメットをかぶって遊ぶこ
とができた。私も試したが、コン
ピュータ・ゲームに近く、未来の
アートとまでの覚悟は残念ながら
受けなかった(ジャック・ティルトン
画廊、ジャン・シリンチオン企画、
六月四日-七月三日)。

(すきまぐらにえ・美術家)



右—「スルー・ザ・ルッキング・グラス」展
1992
左—赤坂慎一郎 画廊のリンリン 1992
「あまりにも多くの肌まつわるトラブル」展より
photo Kunié Sugura

Hudson -

This is a review about "Trouble over so much skin" show
in an influential monthly art magazine in Japan.
I just love to let you know about it.

See you.

Chinichin

"TROUBLS OVER SO MUCH SKIN"—This is a very funny show that aims to render ridiculous the current uproar over sexually explicit art. The work is neither erotic nor pornographic, but instead has a kind of enlightened barnyard matter-of-factness about sex. John Lekay has been causing a minor sensation lately, and his "Ring a Ring of Roses" is the most conspicuous work on view—a daisy-chain orgy of inflatable women with strap-on dildos. Another Lekay piece is more economical, and more absurd: a lone basketball with a black dildo strapped onto it. Elsewhere are G.B. Jones' lesbian drawings, whose style has been appropriated from Tom of Finland, and Richard Hawkins' collages of mostly gay-porn skin shots on top of pages from art magazines showing viscous paintings by members of the contemporary male canon: Polke, Kiefer, Schnabel, and Bleckner. Through Aug. 7. (Feature, 484 Broome St. Closed Mondays.)



G. B. Jones, from the *Tattoo Girls* series, 1987, Pencil on paper, 13¼" x 6½".
Courtesy Feature.

G. B. Jones

Presented in the back room at Feature, G. B. Jones's meticulous and obsessive *Tom-Girl Drawings* offer glimpses of an intensely urban, punk-inflected, lesbian pornography. Drawn in pencil, mostly on 8½-by-11-inch paper, some on the backs of fliers or Xeroxes, Jones's pieces usually follow short narrative sequences. In one, a girl gets a tattoo and then convinces her friend to get one too. Another, more classic, porn scenario involves a prison breakout. The figures are smoothly drawn yet awkward, implicitly posed for the viewer's gaze, giving the compositions a certain flatness despite the plush contours of the bodies.

Jones started out roughly copying work by the gay male pornographer Tom of Finland. Some of her drawings, in fact, look almost like tracings of Tom's motorcycle cop and prison sequences, with all the participants redrawn as girls. Yet this "copying" doesn't necessarily make Jones's work less interesting. Instead, it evokes the kind of punk covers of classic male rock songs that girl bands did in the early '80s. Jones is also "covering" classics, laying claim to a gay male

tradition of porn, shifting the aesthetic from pinup boy to hardcore girl, and assimilating the sex-and-power fantasy sequences into her own urban lesbian milieu.

Jones has mainly published her work in the Toronto gay fanzine *J.D.'s*, which she co-edits with Bruce La Bruce. The drawings act as documentation of this subculture, and mark its eruption into a gallery context. Like La Bruce's recent film, *No Skin Off My Ass*, Jones's drawings place sex within everyday life, using representations that are playful, self-mocking, and self-referential. Especially as presented at Feature, accompanying an exhibition of recent works by Tom of Finland, Jones's drawings seem both intensely reverent and irreverent. They represent a very different generation of gay popular culture—but one that, like Tom's, initially circulated privately, and underground.

Where Tom's men are ultimate fetish figures, often so grotesquely out of proportion they seem like caricatures, Jones's women are more ordinary, close-at-hand, like fantasies of people you know. She adapts the lush Tom of Finland visual style, with its care-

fully shaded mounds and contours, to women's bodies, carefully rendering the curve of a breast, an ass, or a thigh muscle. Heavily outlined, and somewhat more casually drawn, the figures have a comic-book feel. Jones clearly revels in her trashy influences and bad-girl pose, especially in the women-in-prison narrative. Alternating between fantasy and documentary impulses, the scenes are all about power, with Jones restyling Tom's stereotypically gay male erotics of uniforms and leather for a contemporary punk aesthetic that both mirrors and mocks that uneasy fascination with the signifiers of authority.

While the drawings are meant to function as porn, part of what is interesting about them is that they are not located in bedrooms or private spaces but in the public worlds of the club, the store, and the street, where girls cruise and watch and pick up one another. The drawings depict a world of women relating sexually in public spaces, a kind of interaction traditionally reserved for men. Especially viewed now, Tom of Finland's drawings have a distinctly nostalgic feel, like recollected scenes from a youth now past. With their urban locales and obsessively detailed renderings of gay street styles, Jones's drawings take place in the present, in the context of a contemporary lesbian remaking of drag, leather, S&M, and other practices, again, often associated with gay male sexual culture.

The drawings, as presented at Feature, were matted and under glass (as were Tom's)—a choice that seemed to de-emphasize both their rough presentation and everyday materials. Having seen Jones's work before, in a group show at New Langton Arts in San Francisco, I preferred it as presented there, with the sheets tacked to the walls so that the uneven shapes, frayed edges, and creased paper were integral to the work. One of the strongest pieces, from *Tattoo Girls* (1987), is completely crumpled—which is itself a statement, however ambiguous.

It's this weird conjuncture of the meticulous and the throwaway, the obsessive and the careless, along with an implicit confrontationality, that give the drawings their power, suggesting the punk strategies at work on a structural level, and not merely as content. For it is this roughness, with the implication that the audience addressed by the drawings is precisely the world of punk girls in mohawks depicted in them, that saves Jones's work from what could seem like so much exotica. Carefully crafted and yet resolutely "amateur," bringing together producer and consumer, they occupy an uneasy relationship with their own status as commodities. (*Feature*, July 10–August 9) Liz Kotz

More than other marginalized, politicized artistic "communities," gay artists have been an ever-present, if unadvertised, element of the art world. Lesbian presence in the same arena, with the added element of sexism, poses a different, more complexly suppressed profile. Its relatively recent aesthetic outing—through trend-setting group shows like "Against Nature," "Erotophobia" and "All But the Obvious," and striking political street visuals by ACT-UP and Queer Nation—has paradoxically glamorized the marginalized status of gay and lesbian artwork. A new generation of openly homosexual artists and dealers now creates, exhibits and sells their work.

"Situation," curated by Nayland Blake and Pam Gregg, intends to update and expand this dialogue. Delving into the sticky three-pronged intersection of art, sex and stern political stances, the show presents 36 artists who are more firmly entrenched in the art world than the realm of identity politics. Their generally postmodern-influenced perspectives illuminate a point in time when defining formal and aesthetic concerns are finally beginning to disengage from political issues surrounding AIDS, gay rights and the legitimization of sexual practice.

Acknowledging what Gregg calls "the divergent voices that make up this complex community . . . the shared territory that has been negotiated by different people in vastly different ways," the show is unified by being limited to a generation of artists under age 40. The large grouping attempts to suggest an illusive comradery from a queer artistic heritage of shadowy inherited manners and aesthetic proclivities.

Oddly enough, this exhibit parallels the concurrent "Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation" (CARA), a nationally-scaled pseudo-blockbuster that surveys and historicizes 20 years of a community's ongoing, under-recognized artistic output. Like "Situation," CARA ambitiously attempts to define its multi-faceted subject: "A positive social and cultural term that denoted cultural resistance to ethnic stereotyping, discrimination and cultural repression." Curated by national advisory panels and organized by UCLA's Wight Gallery, CARA's strategy combines textual didacticism with work by 90 artists—many unknown to the general art public—to connect a divergent sub-culture.

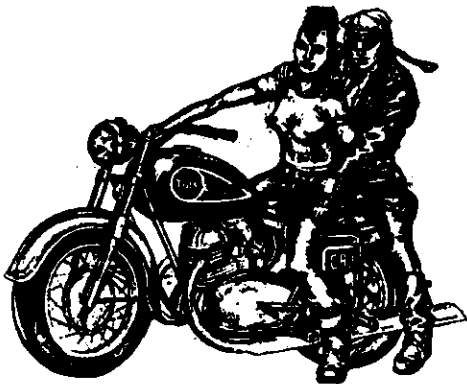
Regardless of scale, neither of these shows is able to provide a cohesive definition of a culture, but each strongly makes its presence known. (Both shows alienated various segments of their respective communities.) While gay artistic identity is complicated by the overlay of race, class and religion, Chicano tradition has a more solid tradition of ethnic and artistic practice, which nevertheless is difficult to document

adequately. Most of the artists in "Situation" graft their sexual otherness onto art; the results often take the form of an inside joke. Rex Ray's clever *Fountain* is a golden reference to Marcel Duchamp who, while certainly an idol to many of the artists here, is hardly a Judy Garland-style gay icon. Similarly, the color photographs of cross-dressers by Cathy Opie and Hunter Reynolds are artfully confrontational reworkings of traditional representations of outsider faces. CARA's numerous homages to Frida Kahlo and photojournalistic images of Chicano street life, on the other hand, have a broader-based cultural significance and are more easily read from viewpoints outside both the Chicano and art communities.

The thorny debate of artistic merit takes on markedly different, imbalanced connotations when undertaken with these exhibitions in mind. CARA's inclusion of United Farm Worker protest posters, momentos, snap shots and grade school art projects is understood as a controversial, grass roots expansion of art museum standards, while funky, low rent works by Clifford Hengst, G.B. Jones, Cary Leibowitz and Linda Matalon in "Situation" self-consciously turn marginalization into aesthetic content as they comment on glitzy contemporary work while simultaneously making assertions about sexual identity.

More disturbingly, both shows share an uneasy gender mix. "Situation," which subdivides its curatorial duties along boy/girl lines, is visually tipped toward testosterone. The most explicitly homoerotic works, and those dealing with AIDS, are ironically by women. Monica Majoli's exquisitely obsessive oil paintings explore territory of gay male porn, while little of the work by men acknowledges lesbian issues. This imbalance demarcates the frequent exclusion of lesbian work from more blue chip venues. The Latinas fare a bit better in CARA, where aesthetic concerns are more connected to broad social concerns. "Feminist Visions" are nonetheless relegated to a separate, albeit strengthening section, with notable pieces by Ester Hernandez and Yolanda Lopez.

There are uncanny connections between work in both shows: Jack Pierson's glittering, abandoned go-go platform sculpture mines a strata of campy pop culture strikingly similar to Amalia Mesa-Bains's altar to Latin American screen star Dolores Del Rio. Looking at both exhibitions, the shifting tides of Chicano and gay and lesbian visibility become frighteningly apparent. Hot, trend-setting movements all too often evolve into snubbing spells or a commercially-rewarding lack of content. The strongest work in CARA is energized by the radical traditions of political activist groups, much as the gay community, with the fight against AIDS, has forged a media-savvy visual presence. It has taken 20 years for a Chicano sensibility to surface in a mainstream museum context, while shows like "Situation" find lesbian and gay artists sorting things out in alternative spaces, working their way toward joining art history.



G.B. Jones
Motorcycle Girls
Pencil on paper

by Christian Huygen

When is an art show like a no-holds-barred high-heeled mud wrestling match? When it's "Situation," a show that pulls together work by 36 gay and lesbian artists, on view at New Langton Arts through July 13.

The show is as vigorous and diverse as the group of people who made it: artists of every class and color are represented here. Their work forms a wonderfully chaotic tumult of voices. Like good sex, "Situation" surprises you, makes you laugh, makes you squirm, and leaves you wanting more, more, more. It's better than *Cats*.

The exhibition was co-curated by Pam Gregg and Nayland Blake. Gregg told me, "It surprised me how well the art by lesbians and gay men worked together; I was pleased that there seemed to be so many dialogues, crossings and layering between the different works. Installing the show was really a process of discovering those intersections and connections."

Writing the Rules

For starters, G.B. Jones playfully tries on Tom of Finland's oversized boots to see if they fit her and the shoplifting biker girls she draws. In her hands, representation and objectification become a game — and she gets to write the rules.

Then John Lindell dissolves an orgy into a ghostly schematic of orifices which form a lovely, disembodied constellation on the gallery wall. And Rodney O'Neal Austin loops the first words ever spoken over a telephone wire back upon images of a porn film kiss that overflow the piece's gilt-edged frame, playfully referring to the artist's day job as a phone-sex worker.

Cliff Hengst enshrines cigarette, Madonna songs, and clothing, and then suggests where one might find redemption from all of this. (Captain Midnight Art Decoder Secret Hint: those names you can't quite read aren't Cliff's old boyfriends; they're, well, they're actors who've done work in a video format.) And Carrie Yamaoka's cover version of *Tropic of Cancer* reads several different ways, including *This is what I have to do to male literature just so I can find something in it of interest to me* and *This is what I have to do to male literature just to keep from being hurt by it*.

Cary Leibowitz throws back at us the names we've given to the bars where we meet each other; they form a bittersweet poetry of winks and lingering glances. Ester

Troquera," una obrera que se lleva una sonrisa secreta, triunfante, provocativa, sensual. And Rex Ray goes head to head with Duchamp — but, as always, the *Fountain* is you.

Wrought iron turns as liquid as the smoke from a drag queen's cigarette, and velvet oozes and drips, in D-L Alvarez's sphinxlike *Flourish* (pair), and in Brett Reichman's *Squeecker*, a child's toy becomes a marker for abuse and terror... unless, of course, that's just me projecting again.

Monica Majoli's untitled paintings are either chilling allegories or beautifully crafted snuff or — better — both. Her tiny painting of a wrist with a small cut on it, held out to us as if it were some kind of evidence, is eloquent, understated and unforgettable.

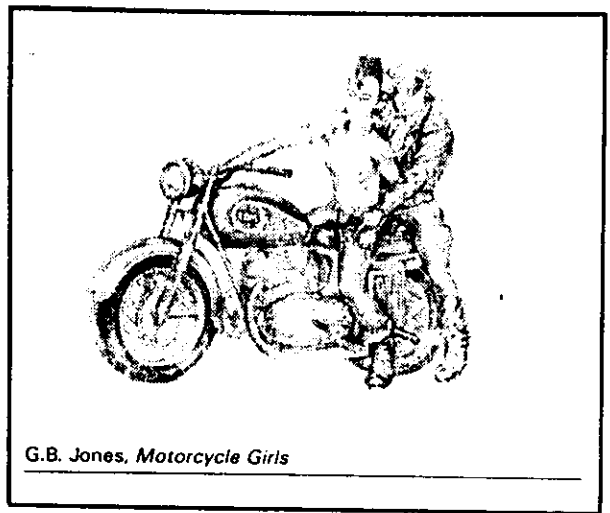
Improbable Triumph

Millie Wilson casts in bronze the dream symbols of a lesbian's case history, and the objects — a turnip and a potato — become small monuments to an improbable triumph in spite of everything: God, the law and psychotherapy. And in Wayne Smith's monolithic *Boyfriend* (*He Traffics in Men*), broken fragments of language ("He doesn't kiss"; "He doesn't mind the taste of hospital food"; "He got real verbal near the end") go to heaven —

or at least, they get to float in the sky with a backdrop of twinkling stars. Shoot, I'd settle for that.

The work assembled here is inventive, complex, self-conscious and self-critical. Articulate propaganda and personal documentary contend with playful erotica, ribald conceptual humor and spiritual autobiography.

But what's most extraordinary, to this reviewer anyway, are the works that take something familiar — a phrase, a name, a child's toy or a bit of wrought iron — and tear that thing out of its usual context so that it suddenly points in a hundred unsuspected directions. To see something familiar without its comforting veneer of everydayness can be shocking, surprising, hilarious and terrifying by turns — or all at once. This foreignness found in familiar things is perhaps the quintessential experience of the outsider looking in. "Situation" magnificently captures this outsideness: splendid, contradictory, complex, wild.



G.B. Jones, *Motorcycle Girls*