Romanic Humanism

FENCE PUSSY at the Turn Out Festival, Pyramid Club (closed).
ROBERT FARBER at Artists Space, 223 West Broadway, to Dec. 1

thing was merely a veil behind which were higher, i.e., spiritual, meanings. Everything had a meaning and nothing was simply what it was. Beyond that, people's understanding of natural phenomena was almost zero.

Today, we have a specific, pin-pointed knowledge of how the immune system operates. At least 90 percent of that knowledge has only been acquired in the last ten years, in the fight against AIDS. I believe that one of the tasks of those of us with AIDS is to learn to live with uncertainty, period. My idea of life in the universe can be summed up with: Better times happen. What science I've found has been in refining the historical perspective.

My having been infected with something other than AIDS for six years before I reveved positive news, that didn't do a daily battle how I was going to feel when I woke up or if I was going to be able to paint. I didn't know if, in the middle of a date, either with friends or romantics, to have to go home, which often happened. I was stoned, in a graphic way, to learn that I would just never know.

In a way, however, there's less about Chronic Fatigue than they know about AIDS. There's less statistical data on what to expect. You have to accept that the line between self and invader is very fuzzy."—Robert Farber

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...with disease and historical responses to vision some comparision to the anonymous collaborative installation at FCP. Wall three years ago in which personal narrations to people with AIDS were counterpointed with a depiction of a health care system which hasn't much matured from the didactic projections of medieval Europe. I thought I had done, though, as most directly Romanic, in the sense that Goethe, Sir Walter Scott or Poe tucked into the chandelier past to seek a joining of love and death. Counterpointing recognition with the need for action, with the need to reach out, is strongly personal and abstracted.

Photographs of the artist being injected with an experimental vaccine are joined to dark macabre rec- tangles. There is a visually seductive is- suet here rather than a challenge to ene- mies. Though once seduced, the viewer finds a skeleton in the legend, "What I Am You Shall Become." Christian imagery is used to pose a dichotomy between earth and heaven, ideal and actual—or more specifically between what is lived daily during plague and what is unknown.

The exhibition was born in New York in 1948 and graduated from Brandeis University. From 1979 to 83 he was primarily known for his performance and he taught theater at SUNY Purchase and NYU since 1981, when he started studying in the mid-1980s. He has concentrated on painting. In the last two years he has shown in several AIDS-related group exhibits. His Every Ten Minutes, a sound installation of a tolling bell, was widely used in galleries and museums to commemorate Day Without Art on December 1, 1993.

The artist recently talked about his new installation in his West Village home:

"I've done more re-reading of the Middle Ages than I ever thought possible. I'm fascinated with our civilization in the period known as the Renaissance. The Black Death by Philip Ziegler is one of my bible.

"I'm using the image of the Middle Ages to comment on the Middle Ages. People think life is a way that every..."