

NEW ART examiner

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FRED WILSON'S REVISIONIST RECONSTRUCTION
"SPEAKEASY" BY **RICHARD LOVING**
HI-LOW HUMOR AT THE WEXNER CENTER
"ON VIEW" SURVEYS **SEATTLE**

60° CONE OF VISION

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LIMITED PERSPECTIVES

studio curricula and the legacy of
Greenbergian formalism

by Howard Risatti

PARALLEL

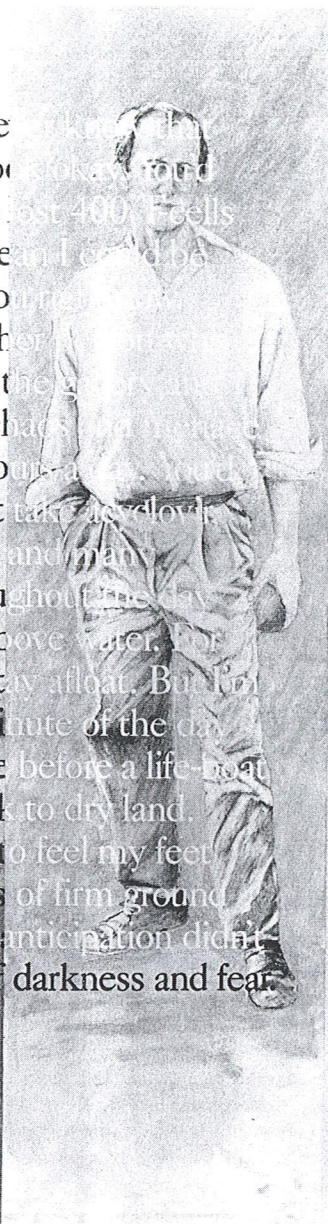
PARALLEL

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To look at me, you'd never know I was HIV+. I mean I look like I never know that I have lost 400 cells since last summer. I mean I could be standing here beside you right now reading this like any other person who happened to walk into the street and you'd never know the chaos that I carry within me 24 hours a day. I never know that I must take the blood Bactrim, AZT and ddI and many different vitamins throughout the day just to keep my head above water. But now I'm managing to stay afloat. But I'm treading water every minute of the day hoping that I do not tire before a life-boat comes to bring me back to dry land. What a joy it would be to feel my feet planted on the sureness of firm ground where expectation and anticipation didn't always include a core of darkness and fear.

RDF 3/92
New York City



ROBERT FARBER,
"Western Blot
No. 15,"
silver mylar,
oil, charcoal
on wood,
62" x 40",
1992. Photo
courtesy of
Artists Space.

Leaning against the wall almost casually, the piece seems felled by experience. But it is by no means pathetic. The work carries with it a mute dignity: We are human, it seems to say; we are reassuringly flawed. It is at moments like these that Drew's sculpture works with a quiet grace.

Prices unavailable.

Mario Naves

Robert Farber, Ping Chong Karen Atkinson & Associates

Artists Space
223 W. Broadway, 212/226-3970

These three installations invoked a conceptual whole. Robert Farber's essay on death bridged to Karen Atkinson's basement travelogue on desire through the nexus of Ping Chong's metaphor for an industrial wasteland. Amidst ominous subject matter was revelation; a reawakening of individuality in the context of a reconstructed "abyss."

The abyss designed by Farber is that of contemporary death from AIDS placed in dramatic

juxtaposition with that of the black plague of Europe. Lest we grow immune to art projects re-presenting the nightmare of AIDS, Farber reminds us no one is immune to death. His constructed wall pieces carry individual references to death within rectangles and squares made of antique moldings, rosettes, and gold-leaf intended to evoke the sacred feeling of altar pieces and the Middle Ages. We read, from 1348 AD, "Everyday the bodies of the dead were borne . . . the whole city, men and women alike, began to be filled with fear," and from 1990 AD, "I don't want to die. I don't know how to die. What do I do?" The quietude of the single voice whispers into the nightmare of mass death, now gathering the cumulative weight of history. Huge, somber panels in the geometric format common to the late Roman period framed the gallery and the wall pieces to merge first style, then mood, to the content of history. Our singularity echoes off the walls of the past to arrive before us saturated by time but clearly, poignantly, sounded as our own. No longer fully alone, yet without illusion, we look back into the reality of life through death. The heroism of life becomes the non-heroic space of the everyday.

Karen Atkinson and her group of "Associates" also use language to embed the contemporary voice

with the resonance of history, but posit the need for a different abyss. Their mock travel bureau installation displays travel posters urging us to "discover" the "exotic," "untamed," "uncharted," "virgin" territories and hideaways. The language of 1992 tourist magazines is joined with the writings of male explorers. Cristóbal Colón describes a 1498 geographic formation "placed something like a woman's nipple." The 1495 mythic history of desire by a "friendly caribe" woman for the male explorer is revealed to be the result of rape and beatings. While John Donne's "roaving hands" in 1600 "discover" the sly geography of "myne precious stones" one is "seduced" by the "caresses" of "the unspoiled" in 1992. Maps and history are revealed as inscriptions by the desire of the male onto the body of the woman, the land, and our social conventions of travel through the language of possession. But as one abyss, the historical, is demonstrably collapsed into the pervasive continuum of the gendered, Atkinson & Associates inscribe on the surrounding walls their own hope for a future history of "love without domination," one whose fearfully unmapped abyss may carry not only the "sorrow" and "mourning" of non-mythologized separation but also the integrity of the Other.

Not for sale.

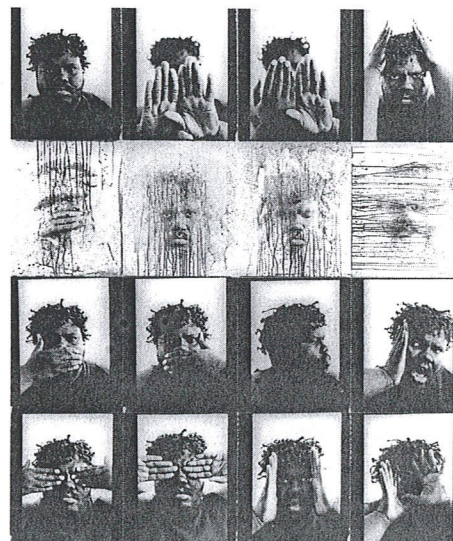
Richard Leslie

CALIFORNIA

No Justice, No Peace? Resolutions . . .

California Afro-American Museum
600 State Dr., Exposition Park
Los Angeles, 213/744-7432

The corpus of this exhibition—one of many responses to the civil rebellion in Los Angeles last April 29—proves more gutsy in addressing real issues than its equivocal title would suggest. The product, perhaps, of grant-writing politics, "No Justice, No Peace?" elides the original imperative with a question. The social contract, we've learned, is not a given, but a barter between "parties," between classes and races. A debate over justice and power spilled more than words in the dialogue of rebellion and the rhetoric of



WILLIE MIDDLEBROOK, "In His Own Image," installation of 16 24" x 20" photographs. Photo courtesy of the California Afro-American Museum.