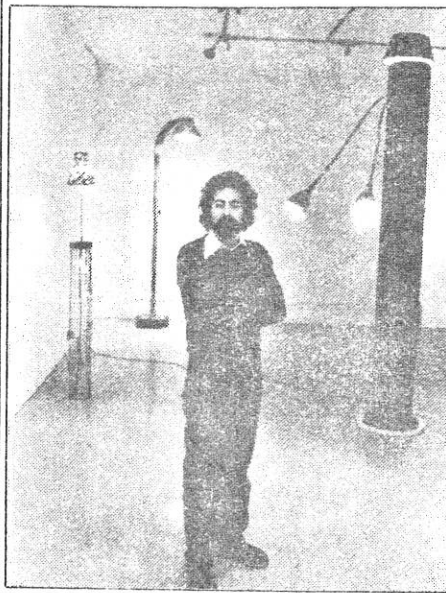


ART

Funky Funky but Small

By Peter Frank



Ronnie Fisher sheds light at Artists Space.

FRED W. McDARRAH

Frank O'Hara in this show).

The peculiar lighting fixtures with which R. M. FISCHER has filled one of the back rooms at Artists Space (105 Hudson Street, to January 20) seem to lack the technical finesse MacWhinnie displays so prodigiously. Crudely constructed from found objects (discarded lampshades, broken stands) or cheap materials, the fixtures are laughably klutzy. But this very klutziness is disarming and engaging, and further examination of the objects reveals not only more workmanship than is at first apparent—the carpentry better wrought than supposed, the paint jobs deliberately, even carefully slapdash—but an active mind (as well as hand) at work. Despite the dumbass stance, Fischer's sensibility is anything but dumb. His wacky juxtapositions (a tiny shade atop a very tall stand) and almost perverse formulations (certain lamps resemble the hermaphroditic robots that populated sci-fi movies between Flash Gordon and *Star Wars*) bespeak an imagination masking its own almost surrealist fecundity with a strenuous, but not often strained, wryness. The clue is on the wall: one of Fischer's sequences of found photographs in which disparate images are linked through a single formal commonality, a halo of light. One of the images is of one of the lamps.

Across the hall from Fischer's installation (also to January 20) is "Waterfall," a vast roll of paper which PIETER HOLSTEIN has filled with an extensive gridwork of figurative images in black and white. Holstein's graphic touch is in knowing control of its own potential for crudity; he vacillates deliberately between exquisite, almost classical rendering and the most banal, child-like cartooning. The imagic dialectic thereby expands from a mere conversation among pictures-of-things to a tension between gradations in style and "skill." Even so, Holstein is emphasizing the friction and coordination between the images themselves—a fact brought home by the paintings, drawings, and prints the Dutch artist is showing in his studio at P.S. 1 (46-01 21st Street, Long Island City, to January 21).