

# ART

By Kay Larson

The empty swimming pool at C.W. Post College in Greenvale, Long Island, is the latest addition to the growing list of alternative spaces. It began its new career in 1976, when artist **RUSSELL MALTZ**, who teaches there, noticed its rather funky possibilities—its open concrete structure, nice slope, rectangular shape, and human scale—all the qualities a minimal sculptor might fall for. Maltz built two pieces in the pool, then turned it over to a succession of artists who, over the course of four years, did 30 variants on "pool aesthetics."

Artists Space, which itself is not much older than the alternative pool, gave the project some money and has now put together a "post-pool" show. It's probably the only time I'll ever be able to call neo-minimalism heartwarming. The ideas—some witty, some prosaic—prove out Hamlet's remark about the nutshell. Maltz drew on the concrete to create a false mass, then put in a real mass during stage two. **TED STAMM**, Maltz's friend and successor, painted a black line that in

photographs seems to lever the pool's floor plane up five or ten degrees. **DON HAZLITT**, who knows how to confront a box, achieved a trompe l'oeil double-entendre by carving a kidney-shaped swimming pool out of the snow at the bottom of the real (rectangular) pool. This Miami-in-the-snow even had palm trees.

The pool held **JOHN MASTRACIO**'s numbing "Dilettante Rock" performance, **JANE HANDZEL**'s films (projected on the black wall), **ELISA D'ARRIGO**'s drapings of white sheets on clotheslines that somehow converted the pit into a sunken fabric garden, and **LUCIO POZZI**'s pseudo-dangerous, Hollywood-style, cliché narrative in which volunteers jumped from a diving board onto a fake stake (Pozzi makes a career of the obvious). Among student work, perhaps my favorite was by **KEVIN CLARKE**, who sat for a day on a red velvet couch in the middle of the pool, "wishing" over a Sears Roebuck Catalogue; his wishes (snips from the catalogue) gradually got plastered over the wall like rising thought-balloons.

Artists Space is also showing two normal installations. One is by **ED LEVINE**, an artist and busy art administrator, who has architecturally altered an isolated room by subtly manipulating light and proportion. The windows and doors in his drywall partitions correspond not to body space but to the room's space, thus confusing one's kinesthetic prejudices. **REESE WILLIAMS** reverts to what Artists Space calls "fiction," but I call neo-post-minimalist punk, or syntax-art extended until the syntax breaks down. I was annoyed by the work's refusal to proffer its secrets, but that annoyance, typically with the punk attitude, forces you to dig deeper. Is there a bottom? Is there meaning after language? Who knows. Williams achieves his impasses by associating words and pictures, or pictures and pictures—one of the less cryptic being photos of Paul Newman during various years of his career, paired with the atomic elements discovered during those years. Another series puts pics of assassinated world leaders next to the repeating image of William's stairwell, which apparently is suffused (for him) with danger. But most works are less communicative. Williams flaunts his concealed intentions, forcing one to stretch all possible associations to the breaking point. He's learned a thing or two from Baldessari and the linguistic/structuralists like Kosuth, but is determined not to admit the connection. Like the systems-artists, Williams aims for empty content; unlike them, he also aims for a private, rather than a public, logic. (Artists Space, 105 Hudson St, through June 21)