

# Art in Review

## Leslie Hewitt

Replica of a Lost Original

*Artists Space*  
38 Greene Street, SoHo  
Through March 10

In this concise installation, Leslie Hewitt connects the dots from civil rights activism to Walter Benjamin to Goya (no small feat) with impressive visual grace. The show is her New York solo debut after several years as a standout in the group show trenches.

Three photo-based works and a wall-mounted broadside, written by Rose Olu Ronke Ojo with the artist, sift through issues of race, family, mechanical reproduction, exposure, obfuscation and the inevitability of change. The title, "replica of a lost original," is art-historical parlance for a sanctioned copy; it tidily sums up the role photography plays in recapturing the past.

A still life photograph called "Make It Plain" documents an empty easel — support for a missing picture — resting on two dog-eared paperbacks about black protest. (The work's title is a phrase favored by Malcolm X.) A heavy frame replicates the wood of the easel; leaning against the wall, the piece is as sculptural as it is pictorial.

Ms. Hewitt is an exceptionally thoughtful young artist, but there is something exasperatingly oblique about her densely reflexive project. There are powerful ideas at play here, and you wonder if the show's considerable resonance would be diminished if she took Malcolm X's advice and tried making it plainer.

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