

GRACIE MANSION GALLERY

MAC ADAMS

"Post-Modern Tragedy"

January 4 - January 27

Gracie Mansion Gallery presents Mac Adams' "Post-Modern Tragedy," a series of photographs which merge industrial design with images of domestic and political violence. Constructed tragedies are seen reflected in the surface of such consumer objects as coffee pots and lamps, and are meant to be a critique of consumer culture and post-modern design.

Adams sees neo-40's and 50's post-modern design as a facade which masks an undercurrent of violence prominent in contemporary society. The very design of the objects Adams photographs often bring this underlying violence to the surface. For instance a kettle used in one of the photographs has the nozzle of a gun barrel and a release that functions as a trigger. Upon the object, tragic vignettes are reflected which augment the violent connotations of the commodity's design. The object thus acts as a mirror, making visible what exists behind the scenes, an incident which is staged by Adams.

In this sense, Adams' reflected images are a play on the "index," a type of sign which marks or traces its cause. The "cause" in Adams' photographs is the tragedy, while the index is the tragedy's reflection caught by Adams' camera and affixed to the commodity's surface. The "real" event of Adams' photographs is therefore not directly depicted; only its reflection is represented. The piece we observe is secondary documentation of a tragic event or mystery which takes place at the time Adams creates his photograph, but only exists for the viewer as an apparition from the past.

Mac Adams is also well known for his sculpture and public commissions. His design for the "Universal Soldier," was chosen by the New York Korean Veterans Memorial Commission and is scheduled for installation October 1990 in Battery Park, NY.

DEBORAH MASTERS

Sculpture

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Gracie Mansion Gallery also presents sculpture by Deborah Masters. Featured will be freestanding hydrocal and graphite figures which draw upon art historical references and allude to events that Masters recalls in her own life or the lives of people close to her. The death of a child or a loved one, divorce, and alienation act as catalysts, yet Masters' figures express a strength of character often achieved by one's personal struggle with tragedy. In this sense, Masters' subject matter may be about loss, but ultimately the work is about survival.

Masters' installation in part is a regrouping of work included in the exhibition Urban Figures which was mounted last year at the Whitney Museum at Philip Morris. The figures are of women who gather together for strength after the death of a child. Masters will also exhibit a seated figure which merges abstract and figurative strategies in order to illustrate the subject's emotional complexity.

Masters' female figures, whether they are displayed together or alone, maintain a feeling of isolation both from each other as well as from the viewer. This is partly due to their monumentality (they are slightly larger than life), and partly due to their stoic nature which is reflected by their rigid stance. And yet, there is a duality to Masters' subjects in that they evoke a strong emotional response from the spectator. In order to interact with the figures, we must intrude upon the space they control. In this manner, Masters' women are powerful in their silence.

This exhibition is presented in collaboration with LedisFlam Gallery who will also mount a solo exhibition of Deborah Master's work through February 3rd.