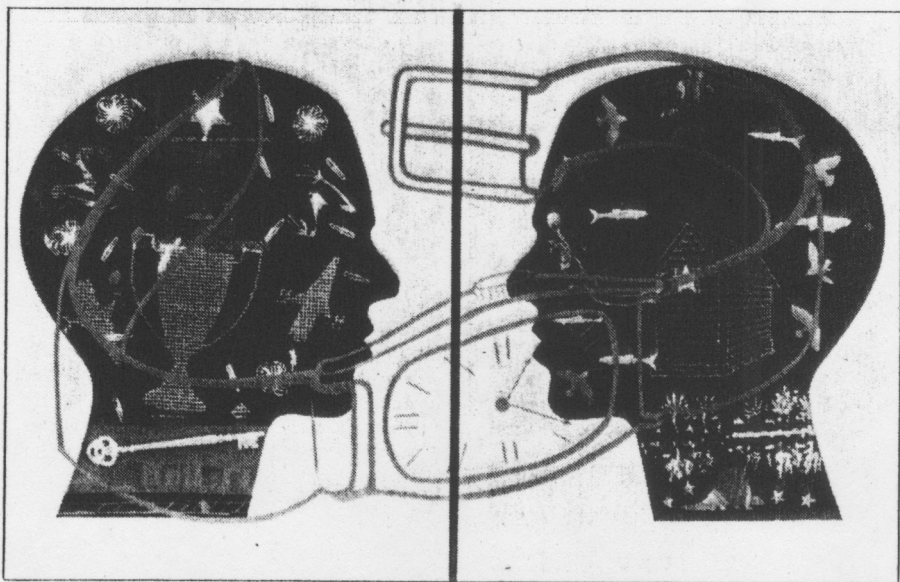


PICK OF THE WEEK



Elizabeth Bryant, *Untitled*, 1986.

In lieu of its Annual Downtown Artists Show, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions has inaugurated the **LACE Annuale**. As in the past, LACE has brought in outside curators. Ned Rifkin, curator of Contemporary Art for the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., reviewed more than 270 proposals and visited 25 artists' studios before selecting 14 artists "with a mild penchant for the conceptual thrust." While no Whitney Biennial (which has the broad style Los Angeles sorely needs), the Annuale could and does showcase some engaging and imminently important artists. Predictably, the liveliest works in the exhibition are concerned with our ongoing relationship to the mass media. In their collaborative piece *The Oath*, Connie Fitzsimons and Bruce Meisner present a gilt-framed facsimile of Jacques-Louis David's *The Oath of the Horatti* overlaid by a formal analysis of the painting. Mounted on a larger quadrant of gold-toned-tourist photos and a repeating text, it explores the difference between original intention and generations of interpretation. Max Almy's videotape *Lost in the Pictures* parodies MTV to scrutinize the inherent voyeurism of television, while Laura Hayes' video *Keep Walking* deals with the authoritarianism of the tube. The influence of media on how we look, think and act is just as pronounced in Carolyn Krause's garments made of variously sized film stocks — very clever metaphors for the concepts "you are what you wear" and "you wear what you are." In a similar vein, Elizabeth Bryant's *Target*, a series of black-and-white photograms depicting human silhouettes filled with clichéd iconography, investigates the impingement of signifiers on the psyche. In a world that seems to have only an electronic memory, Diane Buckler's elegant granite tombstones sand-blasted with surrealistic photo imagery stand as embalmed dreams. An oversized painterly color transparency by Keith Downey depicts in montage fashion a female figure puppeteered by light "strings" attached to a large hand; in the context of the show, it seems to suggest how photographers manipulate the viewer through the use of light. The three painters in the Annuale share this preoccupation with an information-glutted world: Kady Hoffman's palimpsest-shrouded letters float in atmospheric fields like beautiful Chinese calligraphy freed from signification; Roy Dowell and Marc Pally present emotionally restrained but vigorous abstractions full of references to art history. Although themselves firmly entrenched in a postmodern tradition, these artists examine the postmodern condition with an uncommon intelligence. At LACE, 1804 Industrial Ave., downtown; thru Oct. 19. (213) 624-5650.

—Constance Mallinson