

Alix Pearlstein

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Many of Alix Pearlstein's wall sculptures can make you want to grab them by both ends and try to drive them home, not only because they are often configured like handlebars, but also because they seem as if they each have a specific gadget-like motor function. *The Road* (all pieces 1989) for example, resembles an overzealous roll-bar with its two rear-view mirrors and bubble-windows that look like they were popped out of a conversion van (the stuffed animal stuck to the inside of each window is a reference to American-car-culture's newest form of self-expression). Rubber wrapped around opposite bends in the chrome pipe indicates precisely where to hang on for the ride. Pearlstein combines implied kinetic activity with a witty choice of common objects reinterpreted by their new placements and/or textures, making sculptures that are souped up by their accessories.

The rubber cord that laces *Formula Joy* together, combined with the two yellow, sagging protuberances hanging from its bottom, gives the piece a kinky quality that is

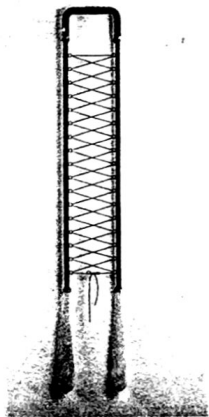
welcome in this work. Chains, mirrors, satin ribbon and rubber often lead double lives, and Pearlstein's work plays with both of them; therefore we can read the plastic jugs, flamingo bodies, or flowers in highly suggestive terms, particularly since they are all either lathered with pigment or flocked with synthetic fibre. The flocking is highly original and outrageously funny—it has a sexy, silly feel to it, which makes me believe that it is not a coincidence that most of this work is bilaterally symmetrical. Pearlstein very well may be producing a type of body art hiding behind the commodity discourse.

More, More, More, with its blue velvet rope and two suspended mirrored balls, rightly exposes the glitz and exclusionary practices of most club scenes as insipid and ultimately destructive.

Promises, Promises uses a similar configuration, which in this instance suggests the restrictive nature of lingerie with its long, white satin ribbon tying the piece together.

The titles of both sculptures aptly describe the attitude of Pearlstein's work: both conceptually glib and sexually confined, it is emp-

wered with the ability to function suggestively on many levels. ■



•*Formula Joy*, 1989.
Mixed media. 84 x 16 x 5 inches.