

of sites seen from afar appear caressed by scenic particularity, yet actually elude specific description; then, the supposed close-up views reveal even less information of the world; finally, intimate examination of matters produces only occluded views, as a windowblind is all that is available to sight. These three distinct vantage points taken in a variety of khaki-toned canvases reveal the ultimate subjectivity of viewpoint that is Schön's artistic claim.

People familiar with Schön's conceptual illustration are aware of the fact that it benefited from studies under Gerhard Richter, in Düsseldorf, and that Schön has evidently grasped the master's aesthetics of impassive typicality. But more ought to be made of the younger artist's reprise of a mode of perception widespread in much of the literature of the 1950s. Think of the device of the windowblind utilized for purposes of thwarting tantalized desires, prominently featured in Alain Robbe-Grillet's 1957 novel *Jealousy*. Through the voyeur's perspective actuality loses its reality as it becomes a literary construct, and it is for this reason as much as for the presence of the blind itself that Schön's art suggestively participates in what might be called the Neo New Novel.

Marjorie Welish

Alix Pearlstein

Postmasters

Alix Pearlstein's work has always had a certain sense of physical inevitability to it, whether it came in the shape of funky, flocked sculptural objects or clear plastic bags filled with air or water — the various meanings that can be ascribed to her objects remain wholly determined by a peculiar, but logical sense of use-value or function. In this exhibition, Pearlstein seems to have melded the toy-like aspects of her earliest work with the household object-ness of the work that immediately followed, to create a new sense of both space and humor amongst several characters from the animal kingdom introduced here. A plastic fly, a rubber snake, a toy bird or dog, and fur mice (not to mention a plastic human finger) either perform tasks or tricks for the successful structural and conceptual completion of the works in this show. In *Suspended Branch*, toy dogs tied to a tree branch make the piece "work," while the space cordoned off by stakes and a corral of yarn in *Free Country* is clearly made free for the rubber snake and off-limits for us

(even if someone did step on it at the opening). The bird in *Hanging Bird*, or the fingers in *Finger* or *Finger Finger*, each are as good an object as anything else to keep a string tautly in place, whether it hangs from the ceiling or stretches across the floor. Pearlstein's video, *Yip* — in which many of the artist's friends foolishly yet touchingly imitate the barking toy dog, provides the most hilarious and relevant *human* reading of what is a deceptively simple but truly "ground breaking" show.

Terry R. Myers

Mike Metz

55 Mercer Street

In older visual art, the relation between word and image is complex. Some old master European paintings and Chinese landscapes contain words, which influence how we interpret what we see. And in a more literal way, many cubist collages and surrealist illustrations set words in images. Mike Metz displays sequences of letters, which look like English-language words, on a banner, on wall displays, and within a floor sculpture where these pseudo-words are carved into ivory soap.

Many Soho artists transform informal materials, industrial debris or consumer products, into art, re-presenting the decay of their city. Metz treats words the same way, creating would-be nouns and simulacra of verbs that together yield ersatz sentences. Arthur C. Danto has distinguished between how words are *outside* the world, insofar as they represent things in the world, and how in a more literal way, as marks, they are also *in* the world. Metz plays on this distinction. We can easily take an aesthetic distance on even the most banal things. It is harder to view words that way, for normally we use them in a utilitarian fashion, like tools.

Without recourse to blatantly surreal images, Metz's works give the oddly pleasurable sensation that you have lost your mind or, what comes to the same thing, that you are in a country where you don't know a single word of the language. The trouble with the use of words in much recent American art is that the words themselves are often uninteresting. Jenny Holzer in her word-images can never rival a great poet like Adrienne Rich. Metz's important achievement lies in making words the true subject of his visual artworks.

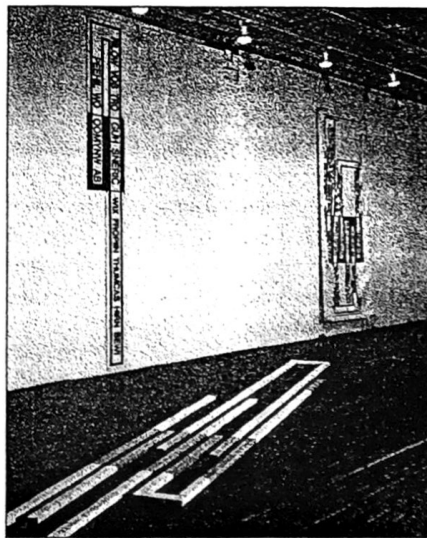
David Carrier



Andreas Schön, *Olynth I*, 1992, oil on canvas, 118x70 in.



Alix Pearlstein, *Hanging Bird* (detail), 1992, string, toy bird, 133x4 1/2x2 in.



Mike Metz, 1992, installation view.