

The New York Times

ART IN REVIEW

February 25, 2005

'Trade'

White Columns
320 West 13th Street, at Horatio Street
West Village
Through March 12

The artist and writer Matthew Higgs is also the new director and chief curator of White Columns. And his gift for multitasking serves him well in his curatorial debut at the gallery, which includes two group shows, three solos and an artist's project.

The most substantial exhibition, "Trade," pairs off two-dozen artists in mutual exchanges of work. Some of the swaps were fairly straight-forward. Cary Liebowitz and Michael Ashkin, for example, barely knew each other. Their exchange of formally unlike work was based primarily on professional admiration. Mike Bidlo and Walter Robinson swapped paintings from the early 1980's, when both were active in the East Village. Rainer Ganahl and Martha Rosler represent a meeting of significant political artists of two generations.

Elsewhere, personal connections enter the picture. Jane Kaplowitz and Deborah Kass swapped portrait paintings of their respective mates: the art historian Robert Rosenblum, in Ms. Kaplowitz's case; the artist Patricia Cronin, in Ms. Kass's. A. A. Bronson gave Eric Hanson a hand-sewn Jockey shorts shopping bag and received in return a pair of his own castoff Levi 501 jeans that Mr. Hanson had customized in intriguingly intimate ways. Other two-fers include Judy Linn and Thomas Nozkowski, Adam McEwen and Nate Lowman, and Aleksandra Mir and Dave Muller, with Jutta Koether and Kim Gordon joining forces for a joint-custody collaboration

Jennifer Cohen, who is also in "Trade," paired with Jesse Bransford, takes a solo bow with a sculptural installation, as does

Michele O'Marah with an amusing video (she has another at Art in General through tomorrow). A selection of paparazzi-style Polaroids by Jim Jocoy are near the gallery door; a project titled "The Most Beautiful Thing Today" by Ms. Mir will continue through the year.

And as if all that were not enough, there's a small group show of 10 bright young artists who are associated with the Herald Street gallery in London. Their names are Alex Birchen, Pablo Bronstein, Lali Chetwynd, Scott King, Cary Kwok, Djordje Ozbolt, Oliver Payne and Nick Relph, Donald Urquhart and Nicole Wermers. Mr. Payne and Mr. Relph are known quantities here; Mr. Urquhart surely will be. And if you didn't know otherwise, you might assume that all of the wee, faux-twee work was locally made, so closely does it match - not to say trade on - the spirit of the New York art world circa, say, 2003.

HOLLAND COTTER