

LACE 8th ANNUALE

September 23 - November 6, 1994

**GORGEOUS POLITICS: Lisa Anne Auerbach, Carl Bronson,
Dennis Olanzo Callwood, Annetta Kapon, Joan Mahony & Cathy
Silverman, Laura Owens**

Admittedly, when I pre-titled this exhibition *Gorgeous Politics*, I was indulging in the rankest sort of wishful thinking. All I can offer in my defense is the observation that most cultural production is wishful thinking of one sort or another. For myself, I was interested in seeing some objects and images in which eloquence and political content might urgently coexist, and it came as no surprise to me that there were less of these available than I might have wished. For the most part the images and objects submitted to this exhibition manifested either eloquence or politics -- or neither -- opting instead for a self-conscious primitivism or an unself-conscious academicism that positioned the work with regard to the *institutions* of culture rather than culture itself.

As a consequence, I often found myself faced with the necessity of choosing *between* eloquence and political content. When this happened, I opted for eloquence in every case -- since purely eloquent art, simply by virtue of its persuasiveness, is always in some sense political. While purely political art, lacking eloquence, lacks the political *power* that invests its content with the possibility of cultural consequence. Moreover, since simply *calling* something "art" no longer wins for it any special right to my attention, I have tried to select objects and images for this exhibition that I consider persuasive in their simple visibility -- that I would consider persuasive whether they were made by an artist or not -- whether they were *called* art or not. In other words, I have selected objects and images for this exhibition

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that I would consider persuasive if I came upon them in a mall, or in an airport, or in a vacant lot.

However, if you ask me just exactly *what* these persuasive images and objects might ultimately *persuade* me of, I must demur. I am no more certain of that, now, than I was when I saw my first Jackson Pollack or my first Andy Warhol. So ask me in twenty years if I'm still around. For the present, I can only offer a vague supposition: that the work in this exhibition has something to do with forming a new vernacular from which generosity and passion have not been academically excised -- which is simply to say, I suppose, that they have something to do with being young in America's first post-colonial, post-institutional moment.

Dave Hickey
Las Vegas

Dave Hickey is a free-lance writer of fiction and cultural criticism. He has served as owner-director of A Clean Well-Lighted Place gallery in Austin, Texas, as director of the Reese Pailey Gallery in New York, As Executive Editor of Art in America magazine, and as contributing editor to the Village Voice. He currently holds the position of Associate Professor of Art Criticism and Theory at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and is a contributing editor to Art Issues in Los Angeles and to Parkett magazine in Zurich. His new book The Invisible Dragon: Four Essays on Beauty was published this fall by Art Issues Press.

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Gallery hours: Wednesday - Sunday 12 - 6pm