

BARBARA GLADSTONE GALLERY

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**N E W**

### Thomas Hirschhorn

BARBARA GLADSTONE

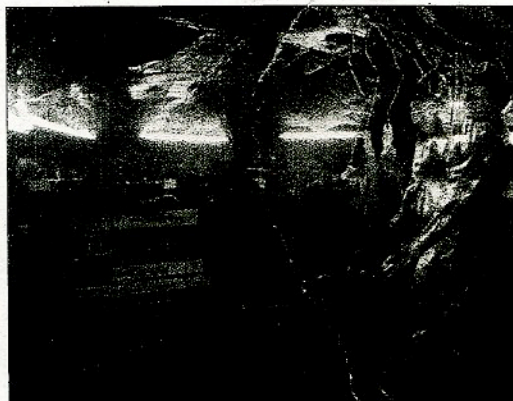
Entering what was once the sleek interior of this gallery, visitors were stunned to encounter a funky, very funny rendition of a prehistoric cave, complete with subterranean caverns, slippery trails, and rocky passageways. It took Thomas Hirschhorn and eight assistants more than two weeks to create this illusion, using the most minimal of materials to accomplish it: corrugated cardboard

and brown packing tape. Yet, despite the transparent fakery of the fabrication, the installation managed to transport viewers to a simpler time—if not that of the Cro-Magnon, then at least the 1960s.

Like Fred Flintstone's living room, the landscape of this show, titled *Cavemanman*, was punctuated by incongruous touches of modernity, such as garish fluorescent lights and garbage pails overflowing with empty soda cans. Storefront mannequins swathed in aluminum foil, like badly made tribesmen in a cheesy natural-history display, stood in purposeless groupings. Behind them, video monitors showed images of the cave of Lascaux, with its 30,000-year-old paintings—or could Hirschhorn have been referring to another fake cave, Lascaux II, constructed to prevent tourists from damaging the original? In the final room, as in Lascaux, the walls and ceiling were covered with markings; here, the phrase "One Man = One Man" was spray-painted repeatedly across the cave. (Clever, yes, but where were the women in this utopian vision?) Also on the walls were photocopied pages from heaps of philosophy and political-science textbooks that were so popular on college campuses in the 1960s and now sit on remainder tables.

Though Hirschhorn's politics here—lashing out at social and economic inequities—may come off as simplistic (or as a complicated way of saying that the cavemen had the right idea), the piece was a brilliant departure from the standard commercialized gallery experience, and a joyous one. In that sense, he made his statement.

—Barbara Pollack



Thomas Hirschhorn,  
*Cavemanman*, 2002,  
mixed media,  
installation view.  
Barbara Gladstone.