

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Weinstein, Matthew, "Review," *Artforum*, May 1994, pp. 102



Kirsi Mikkola, foreground: *Off Where? To the Netherworld*, 1993, painted plaster, 70 x 88 x 86".



Jim Hodges, *A Possible Cloud*, 1993, silk, plastic, and cotton, 24 x 24'.

that Glo' can't seem to go on when the flowers no longer have human heads.

—KS

JIM HODGES

CRG ART

Jim Hodges sends letters on baby-blue stationery adorned with baby-blue-bow stickers, which arrive in light-pink envelopes embellished with butterflies. Appearances to the contrary, they're not camp but pretty, kind of touching, and a bit melancholy. To describe such missives (and much of Hodges' work) as "feminine" is to say nothing more than that his sensibility overlaps with that social myth.

The centerpiece of Hodges' first one-person exhibition in New York was *A Diary of Flowers*, 1994, which consisted of 565 pen doodles of flowers on paper napkins pinned around the main room of the gallery in an irregular configuration. In another room sat a pink-cloth-covered box in which to store the napkins with a separate compartment for pins. Hodges' napkin drawings are wispy, coffee-stained, and ephemeral. They conjure an unrealized, distracted, poetic sensibility, one born of hanging out in coffee shops, gazing dreamily out the window cigarette in hand. These works had a half-finished quality, as if the artist had been arrested in mid-thought, which lent a certain unity to the show: no matter how inventive the mark (and the range of marks was a pleasure), each drawing needed to be surrounded by the others; in this way the installation paradoxically registers both incompleteness and repetition. Also, in this piece, Hodges performs a neat piece of conceptual/material transformation. The flimsiness of the paper napkins is transmuted

into an esthetic of refinement and delicacy; their deficiency as objects becomes an evocation of the fragility of actual flowers.

A small spiderweb made of silver chains, *Untitled (Broken)*, 1993, was pinned to the corner of another room of the gallery. Delicate and kind of exotic, with a fairy-tale prettiness, this piece—held together by chains—also possessed a decided materiality not present in the napkin drawings. It was almost a monument to the ephemeral, an attempt to bronze the intangible. Engaging a similar paradox, but leaning toward the ethereal, were a spray of silk flowers pinned to the wall (*Not Here*, 1994) and *A Possible Cloud*, 1993, a floor-to-ceiling cascade of white gauze with tiny silk flowers floating around inside of it.

The "feminine" properties of Hodges' esthetic bring to mind Robert Gober's nudging of gender roles in his photograph of himself as a bride. While Gober questions these categories through performative gesture, Hodges treads on much more ambiguous terrain, altering our relationship to gender itself by filtering it through his particular sensibility. With his appropriation of the kind of femininity any sophisticated female (over the age of 12) would shun, Hodges produces a melancholic reflection of an outcast sensibility. His poetry belongs to another gender's mythology; his self-imposed alienation from the male master-narrative is, for me at least, warm in its familiarity.

—Matthew Weinstein

PAUL RAMIREZ JONAS

POSTMASTERS GALLERY

Under the title "Heavier than Air," Paul Ramirez Jonas presented two installations