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'House Salad: Optimism Between the Cracks'

Through May 11, Linc Real Art

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'ONE WAY.' "Stop." "No U Turn." Road signs usually seem so straightforward. They're designed to have one singular, unambiguous meaning, with text and image perfectly unified in a crystal-clear message. Shot full of holes and ripped from their native environment, however, they become Charles Linder's found-object artworks. What the bullet holes signify is hard to say – maybe the evacuation of simplicity and the introduction of some darker, more complicated and disruptive element. They definitely have to do with redneckism, but given the current state of affairs, it's also possible to read into Linder's signs a more general commentary on violence and its intrusion into a world that is no longer so simple. The signs are hung so that they face out the front window, but the view is almost as interesting from inside the gallery, where Linder's bold signature and the date are visible on the back of each one. It's a tour de force of artistic bravado – similar to Marcel Duchamp's classic claim of *R. Mutt 1917*, but shouted from the rafters through dozens of iterations. Also participating in "House Salad" are Gail Tarantino and L.G. Williams. Tarantino paints text on canvases and pages of braille. Her musings are alternately enigmatic and profound, funny and sad (for example, "one act of retaliation was a flattening of the bumps he discovered that a spoon worked most effectively"). Williams presents his brand-new "Duct and Covered" series, which features a group of everyday objects encased in duct tape. It's intended as political commentary of course, but it's also interesting as a study on the relative utility of duct tape-covered things. A duct-taped toilet-seat cover, for instance, works as well as the original (as long as you don't try to flush it), whereas a tape-covered teddy bear is more unnerving than comforting. *Wed.-Sun., noon-6 p.m., 1632C Market, S.F. (415) 503-1981.* (Lindsey Westbrook)

May 07, 2003

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Talkback

Is it art?

I have to say, the review of "House Salad: Optimism Between the Cracks" is truly one of the most inane things I have ever read [Art Critic's Choice, 4/23/03]. Describing L.G. Williams's latest work as intriguing based on "the relative utility of duct tape-covered things" is not only an attack on the intellect, it legitimizes what is obviously a public relations stunt worthy of a high school dropout.

This work is not only bad – it is arguable that we should not label it "work" at all.

James Kidd
San Francisco