

The death debate

Tender is the night

On the rocks

86ing Ten 15

THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN FREE

G U A R D I A N

THE BEST OF THE BAY ... EVERY WEEK

DANCE

ON THE RADIO: DANCE

BY AMANDA NOWINS

ON DRUM 'N' BAS

sfbg.com This week: Rev

Museums & Galleries

A R T

July 14-19, 1999

L.G. Williams

Through July 24,
Stephen Wirtz

SOME OF THE most interesting contemporary artists are those who can address or find their way through the computer-assisted malady we call "image overload." L.G. Williams and Geoffrey Chadsey, two Bay Area artists featured as the Wirtz Gallery's entries to the city-wide "Introductions" series, are both highly engaged in sifting through the maelstrom of pop culture images and making something of it. Williams captures a sense of confusion in his abstract collage paintings, composed of layers of seemingly random information. He uses what appears to be old-style clip art — crop marks, dingbats, dollar signs, and stray words (some even come from the satirical art-world comics by Ad Reinhardt). He seals thick jungles of these visuals under a golden varnish that resembles tree sap or rippling pools of maple syrup. It's a surprisingly potent mixture. Working on a much more intimate scale, Chadsey finds his inspiration in cheesy straight-to-video Holly-

wood product that failed to make much cultural impact. His series of well-realized figure drawings focuses, almost obsessively, on two adolescent boys the artist freeze-framed in a bad teen drama. Another series depicts the chubby head of a sleeping boy, with various expressions. The pieces resemble studies done by an old master, yet the subject matter is contemporary youth culture. (In a larger macroview, the boy's revealed to be snoozing, dressed in classic grunge wear, on a mottled park bench.) Another series shows a prettier young man posing before a group of southern California palms. His face is created with sinewy lines that give him a frightening animal quality. Chadsey imbues these images with an uncomfortably charged sexuality. These characters, aspiring teen actors, are definitely underage, and presenting them this way, the artist implicates us in the act of checking 'em out. *Tues.-Fri., 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Sat., 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., 49 Geary, S.F. (415) 433-6879.* (Glen Helfand)