

## Eleanor Antin: the last dance of a prima ballerina



A once glamorous dancer with the Ballet Russe is reduced to appearing in saucy silent B-movies at New York dealer Ronald Feldman's stand (557), which has a solo display of the feminist conceptual artist Eleanor Antin. Focusing on her most famous alter ego, the prima ballerina Eleanor Antinova, who "danced" with Diaghilev in the 1920s and 30s, the installation includes photographs, pages from "Antinova's" diary and film pieces.

The poignant *Portrait of Antinova* (1986) is the dancer's dressing table, strewn with cheap and flimsy costumes, while a film is projected on to the looking glass, showing a mature and world-weary Antinova reflecting on her life and career. Around the corner is *Loves of a Ballerina* which recreates an installation originally shown in the gallery in 1986, comprising a mock movie theatre showing silent

movies in which our once noble heroine must perform in demeaning, tawdry roles. The theatre installation is available for \$600,000, while the film portrait is available for \$350,000. Also on view are more recent works, including the series "Roman Allegories", "The Last Days of Pompeii" and "Helen's Odyssey", the last of which was shown in the gallery last month. These newer works are available in editions of five or six for \$35,000.

One of Antin's most important early works, *Carving*, is on view in the PS1 exhibition "Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution" (until 12 May). Based on Michelangelo's idea that a sculptor just reveals the figure that is already in the stone, Antin subjected herself to a 36-day diet to uncover her "ideal" form and photographed her naked body each day to track the progress. **H.S.**