

**Eleanor Antin,  
“Roman  
Allegories”****Ronald Feldman  
Fine Arts, through  
Mar 12 (see  
Soho).**

**F**or her 2002 exhibition at Ronald Feldman, “The Last Days of Pompeii,” Eleanor Antin, then in her mid-sixties, directed (instead of acted in) the role-playing on which she has based her career. She also returned to her most widely known form—the narrative photographic series—in the very contemporary medium of oversized color prints. Although Antin staged her images of heavily made-up and costumed Pompeiians lounging in idyllic settings in early 2001, she preemptively nailed America’s post-9/11 angst about decadence and catastrophe. The show was a triumph.

This 2004 series “Roman Allegories,” presents a similar cast of characters in similarly self-contained tableaux inspired by a line attributed to Pliny: “That summer, in the first year of the reign of Titus, there appeared a small band of players who met with some success until they disappeared without trace, leaving behind one of their number.” The work is newly burdened with

**Eleanor Antin, *Who Are We? Where Are We Going?*, 2004**

metatheatrical references, less timely in Antin’s career and less relevant to world events, but it remains beautiful, teasing and effective.

The one exception isn’t Antin’s work at all, though it is installed in the center of her show at the gallery: Daniel Martinico, playing Maysles to her Christo, filmed the photo shoots. The 16-minute video shows Antin in the role of director, working with all the verve she once brought to such characters as Eleanora Antinova—another of her memorable alter egos, the King of Solano Beach, whose memory haunts the screen when a California jogger inadvertently trots through the set of a classical scene on the sand.—*Sophie Fels*