

Eleanor Antin

RONALD FELDMAN
FINE ARTS

FOR MORE than twenty years pioneer performance artist and filmmaker Eleanor Antin has tried on unlikely alter-egos borrowed from the costume box of history and her own fantasy life. Playing dress-up in performances as a Russian ballerina, the King, Florence Nightingale and others, lets her undertake "a mythological exploration...in a dialogue with myself." Her performances often metamorphosize into films. Antin's

increasing involvement with film has been a way of annexing the power of Hollywood while spoofing it at the same time.

Her installation, *Minetta Lane — A Ghost Story*, was her most completely sculptural and environmental work to date. Here she shows us a deliberate ruin, a fake, but still resonant like those beloved by the early Romantics. Antin creates a tumble of wood and exposed masonry that lies somewhere between a decaying building and an enchanted forest. Groping your way through the dark L-shaped corridor deliberately creates the sensation of a perilous journey.

As in all Antin's re-creations there is a sense of unhistorical history, like a child's drawing of the past. The present seems antiqued, like a slip being dipped tea. The bright lights of the windows against the ominous, crumbling gloom that surrounds it suggests a nostalgia for a time when artistic life seemed simpler and more exciting. Antin literally recreates the opening lines of Dante's *INFERNO* — "Midway in life's journey I came to a dark wood."

It is Antin's gift to not only create a reflective space but to simultaneously issue the nuance of invitation.

— Ann-Sargent Wooster

Wooster, Ann-Sargent.
"Eleanor Antin." *Cover 9*,
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