

Raynor, Vivien. *The New York Times*,  
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**Conrad Atkinson and Douglas Davis** (Ronald Feldman Gallery, 31 Mercer Street): Here's some more food for thought. A British artist with a political cast, Conrad Atkinson contends that the "first world" lives in "permaculture." The sociological equivalent of permafrost or not, it is apparently the cause (or the result) of the technological revolution that, says the artist, would have us "believe in the seductiveness of the end of the world."

Titling his show "Goldfish," **Atkinson** illustrates this and other points with cartoony paintings of radios and televisions that have buttons labeled "truth," "irony," "ideology," "technology" and so on, and with relief assemblages dealing with issues such as unemployment and nuclear war. Taking a similar but wittier tack are the paintings of *The Financial Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. Front pages both, they bring news of Fra Angelico opposing the "Star Wars" concept as unethical and ungodly, and of movies with President Reagan cast as Sylvester Stallone and Stallone as Rimbaud. Even those who don't like the artist's politics will surely have to concede that someone who notices the homophony of Rimbaud and Rambo can't be all bad.

Douglas Davis's show, "Beyond Photography" doesn't seem to be beyond anything very much, although it includes optical tricks smacking of the 19th century and comes with sound effects. The tricks are effected in booths containing two similar blown-up color prints and, between them, a kind of prism consisting of two small mirrors set at an angle to each other. One installation features a picture of a nude woman who faces left, watching a blank television screen, and, on the opposite wall, the same scene with the television turned on. Nose pressed to the junction of the mirrors, the viewer discovers a third image in which the television is on and the woman is the same except that she faces right.

The sound effects include radio static and a speeding train but fortunately not bagpipes. They are activated by pressing buttons set into the frames of Davis's smaller pictures. These are usually color prints evidently made with two negatives — different views of the same beach, for instance, or, more complex, a 1920's-style scene of a woman with a uniformed man in fuzzy but Cubist space, all to the tune of a Chopin piece. Despite its didactic written introduction, it's a quite entertaining show by an artist who is widely known for his work in video and film. (Through Dec. 28.)