

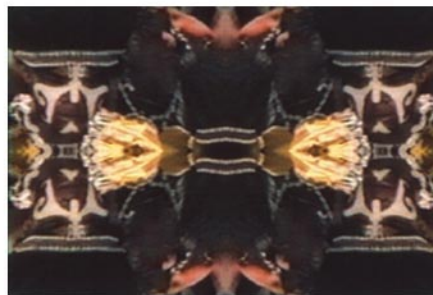
Naves, Mario. "Post-Everything Art That Leads Nowhere." *The New York Observer*, June 11, 2001: 17.

POST-EVERYTHING ART THAT LEADS NOWHERE

A commonplace of the current art scene is that the verbiage surrounding exhibitions of contemporary art is often of greater significance than the art itself. Take, as an example, *Freestyle*, an exhibition of 28 emerging African-American artists at the Studio Museum in Harlem. The word on the show is that it's "post-black." Thelma Golden, deputy director for exhibitions and programs at the museum and curator of the show, states that it is also "post-multicultural," "post-identity" and "post-conceptual." Given this litany of provocative "posts," as well as the improvisatory punch of the title, one can reasonably assume that *Freestyle* concerns itself with artistic momentum, the oncoming wave. And there is, it must be admitted, a sense of shift here: The exhibition is, on the postmodern, a phrase Ms. Golden prudently avoids. Which isn't to say that this shift leads us anywhere.

The work currently at the Studio Museum is as ephemeral and disconnected as anything else that exemplifies our post-whatever mainstream. As it is, the only items New Yorkers will remember after exiting *Freestyle*, if for all the wrong reasons, are Susan Smith-Pinelo's dancing bosom and Eric Wesley's *Kicking Ass* (2000). The only thing that deserves to be remembered is Rico Gatson's *Jungle Jungle* (2001), a video montage derived from King Kong that makes a pointed gibe about racial stereotyping while reminding us that what we expect from visual artists is, well, something to look at. *Freestyle* is at the Studio Museum of Harlem, 144 West 125th Street, until June 24.

MARIO NAVES



An image from Rico Gatson's *Jungle Jungle*, 2001 at the Studio Museum in Harlem