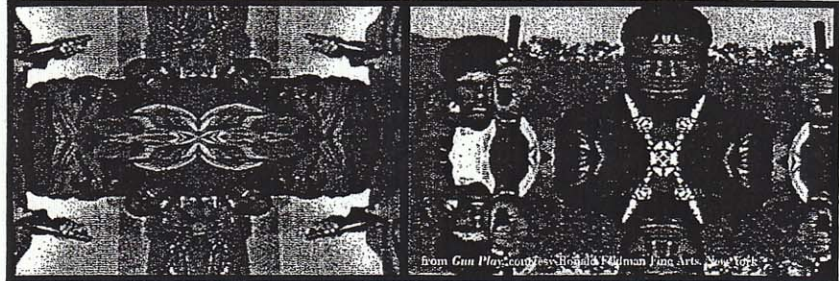


CRACKS IN THE MIRROR

RICO GATSON'S KALEIDOSCOPIC VIDEO SHORTS

Here's a match we'd all like to see: the sexy, brazen Pam Grier versus the steely, squint-eyed Clint Eastwood, a delicious pairing promising bad ass posturing and blazing pistols. Thanks to Brooklyn-based artist Rico Gatson, that match comes to life in a powerful short video titled *Gun Play*, a rollicking, kaleidoscopic collision of genres, heroes and skin colors made out of footage borrowed from *Foxy Brown* and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*. Gatson, who studied sculpture and video at the Yale School of Art before settling in Brooklyn, says he was intrigued with the idea of putting these two figures next to each other, and in playing with the sensory excess in both films. "I was interested in the gratuitous violence and the relationship between genders," he says, "and I wanted to draw out the violence, so I edited the piece such that we only see them at the point of shooting, or as they commit a violent act." To get the piece's roller coaster pulse, Gatson says that he relied on the "influence of music like jazz, bebop and hip-hop and their rhythm, pace



and impact." And to make it all even more gloriously effusive, Gatson used the mirror filter in Final Cut Pro, so that the resulting video is a phantasmagoric explosion effectively excerpting and then expanding on the climactic shots from the original footage. Gatson has used this technique in a series of shorts — his *Jungle, Jungle* brilliantly re-envisioned the original *King Kong* as a pulsating allegory of the threat of the Other, while the coolly ecstatic *Celebration* revisits blaxploitation films. Gatson, who works at home on a G4 and cops to influences as varied as Douglas Gordon and Doug Aitken, says he likes achieving maximum impact with minimal means. "I'm interested in seducing the viewer, and then hitting them on the way out." Like Pam Grier, Gatson does all this, but with inimitable style.

Holly Willis