



Pepón Osorio, *Las Twines*, installation, 1998.

Pepón Osorio

Ronald Feldman, through Sat 16
(see Soho).

Festival art is a term used more and more these days to describe the carnivallike work associated with big international art fairs. The description is meant to be a put-down—a way of impugning the MTV attention span that infects so many young—particularly video—artists. Pepón Osorio's work would seem to fall into this category; but if his work seems carnivalesque, it is also complex in a way that recalls Freud's writings on the unconscious.

Osorio's *Las Twines* ("Twin Girls"), on view at Ronald Feldman, was originally mounted in a South Bronx storefront in the summer of 1998. Employing video and sculpture, *Las Twines*, like most of Osorio's artworks, speaks to the artist's involvement with the community in which he's maintained a studio for the past 20 years. Encountering *Las Twines* in the darkened gallery space

can be an eerie experience: I can't remember the last time an installation actually scared me. (It might have been Osorio's own piece for the 1993 Whitney Biennial, *The Scene of the Crime* (*Whose Crime?*), in which he re-created an apartment murder scene.)

The first thing that hits you is a high-pitched cry of *Papa!* emanating from a pair of mannequins—one very light-skinned, the other very dark—representing sisters in search of their father. They sit in a toy car, emblazoned with the Puerto Rican flag, that slowly circles a track. This all plays out in a mirrored room that reflects the viewer in a way that seems to bring you into the scene—suggesting, perhaps, that the horror you're witnessing is somehow within you. Indeed, *Las Twines* addresses the issues of internalized racism, but it's much more than that: Packing a punch both aesthetically and intellectually, the work transcends all the usual conventions of identity art.—Franklin Sirmans

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