



Guy Overfelt
Inflatable Trans Am
in "American Dream"
at Ronald Feldman Fine Art



Michael Wilson
Headshot (John Ashcroft)
2002
in "American Dream"
at Ronald Feldman Fine Art



@TM Mark
Foodbomb
2003
in "American Dream"
at Ronald Feldman Fine Art

Weekend Update

by Walter Robinson

Some critics take pride in their judgments ("that show is overhung!"). Others hope to instruct the reader ("he's a bumpy detour in the history of modern art!"). For those of us here at Weekend Update, it's all about being topical, and today's topic is the war in Iraq.

Like it or not, we can't help thinking about the war as we make our rounds, and more than ever the shows are invariably framed by their degree of relevance (or lack of it). The strongest manifestation this month of a socially engaged sensibility was found at **Ronald Feldman Fine Arts** with its excellent survey show, "Ameri©an Dre@m." Featuring works by more than 50 artists at the Mercer Street gallery as well as a two-floor storefront around the corner on Broome, the show provides a particularly allusive esthetic analysis of the paranoid, overcompensating, sex-obsessed U.S. political unconscious.

Among the irresistible exhibits is **Guy Overfelt's** puffed-up inflatable Trans Am, **Nina Katchadourian's** comic "Artificial Insemination Series" photographs (showing a swarm of tadpoles surrounding a chicken egg) and **William Pope.L's** freestanding **sheetrock wall** smeared with peanut butter and stenciled along the bottom with the words "The inside of my father's penis (just within the tip) from beyond the edge of the universe."

Special mention goes to **Michael Wilson** for his slightly altered official portrait of **U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft** (he doesn't really have that lazy eye), marked with the Biblical slogan, "I will guide thee with mine eye," and to **Mombert's** looped videotape *One Hit Wonder*, where the ski-masked artist breaks a real beer bottle over his own head. Nice to see, too, a pair of **stop signs** painted with a lurking golem silhouette from 1979 by **Richard Hambleton** and a **stencil drawing** on a chunk of wall by **James Romberger** of an nine-year-old crack addict.

And especially good is **@TM Mark's** *Foodbomb* (2003), a kind of metal barbecue set filled with everything you need for an backyard cookout and fitted with a parachute, so that the American way of life can be dropped on recalcitrant citizens around the world. The artists mean it as a joke, but the notion makes real sense -- dropping hamburgers (or fishburgers) on the enemy has got to work better than dropping bombs.