

Schwendner, Martha.
"Edwin Schlossberg,
Figure: Ground." *Time Out*
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2000, 66.

**Edwin Schlossberg,
"Figure: Ground"**

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, through
Jun 24
(see Soho).

Edwin Schlossberg is a prolific writer and artist who's shown in New York since 1978. He's authored or coauthored a large number of texts on a wide range of subjects, including *The Pocket Calculator Game Book*, *The 1977/78 CB Guide*, an essay in *New Perspectives on Our Lives with Companion Animals* and the article "Insights and Illusions of Philosophy by Jean Piaget." Schlossberg is something of a polymath: He's also an architectural designer whose firm completed the common areas of Sony Plaza in New York. And he's Caroline Kennedy's husband.

How all of this relates to art is another story. From the looks of the work now at Ronald Feldman, it appears that Schlossberg might be better off sticking to one of his other lines of business. He presents two groups of work: a series of poems stenciled onto paper by pencil and then embellished with ink, and a series of brass stencils fabricated from computer scans of those poems. The poems themselves are vague and a bit facile, leaning toward New Age musing rather than philosophical inquiry. *Seem Wake Up*

Shade, for instance, reads, "Being without unconscious (conscience) becomes our destruction wake up seem shade mind your heart." Another piece, *Sadness Happiness*, is equally touchy-feely: "Sadness isolated cacophony always never balance symphony connected happiness."

Extended reading assignments are generally not welcomed by art viewers, who expect something more immediate than a curl-up-and-read-a-book experience (and there are 42 pieces in this show to ponder). But text-based art can conquer the reluctance to stand and "read" an exhibition, as artist-wordsmiths like Jenny Holzer have proved. It's just that Schlossberg's combination of text and visuals doesn't really work:



Edwin Schlossberg, "Figure: Ground," installation view, 2000.

He doesn't gain much by turning his poems into visual art—except that he escapes the criticism (or lack of notice) they might receive in the literary world.—*Martha Schwendener*