

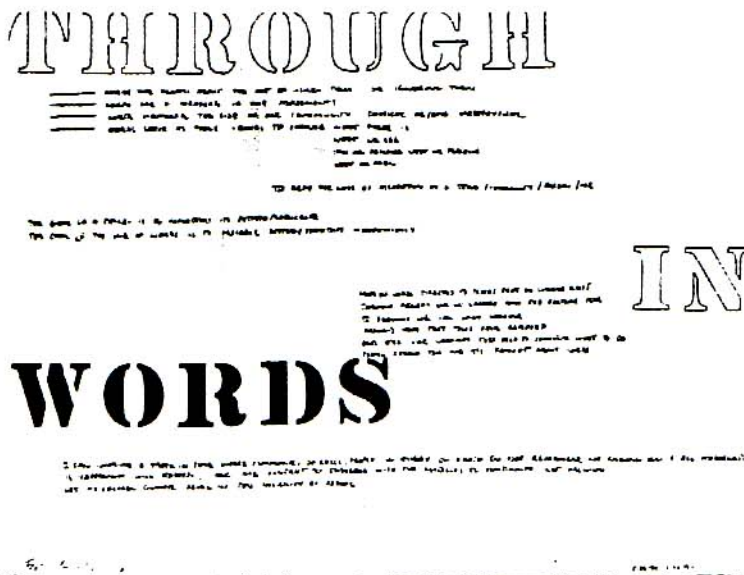
**Edwin Schlossberg
at Ronald Feldman**

The 45 drawings Edwin Schlossberg exhibited make up a series of philosophical observations, written in discrete blocks of text. The group, titled "Knowing Not Known," furthers his 15-year practice of embellishing his own texts. Schlossberg, who holds a Ph.D., is the author of several books on philosophy and computers; he is also a successful designer (his company did the public areas of Sony Plaza in New York).

The current series was inspired by the Yongle Dadian, an early-15th-century Chinese compendium of historical, literary, philosophical and scientific knowledge. In these mixed-medium text-drawings on 22¼-by-30½-inch sheets of Arches paper, the words are judiciously chosen and placed. They are lettered in freehand, block-capital style, in isolation or arranged in long horizontal lines, in vertical columns of one word each and in numerous other configurations. In addition, almost every work is drawn upon with colored ink, usually minimally decorated with abstract patterns of squiggles, diagonals and shading. Occasionally a phrase is printed larger than the rest. The texts are written casually; although they are mostly legible, the style is not precious.

Work such as this, which relies so heavily on text, often degenerates into a reading exercise for the viewer, and unless the artist also happens to be a good writer, which is

Edwin Schlossberg: *Through In Words*, 1995-97, mixed mediums on paper, 22¼ by 30½ inches; at Ronald Feldman.



rare, boredom quickly ensues. Schlossberg's texts seem to be the result of deeply held thoughts and beliefs. On close reading, one finds a certain airiness that prevents one from pinning them down into neatly parsed sentences: "A FUTURE SO AMAZING NO ONE COULD REFUSE/A WISH OF MINE SO CONTINUOUS AND ASSAULTED." Occasional uncertainty as to the reading of a particular word—is it "assaulted" or "assimilated"?—makes one aware of the eye's fallibility in receiving and translating meaning from the written sign.

Idea and *Through In Words* use letters in a simple serif font reminiscent of the stenciled typeface in Jasper Johns's paintings. A literary impetus in the work of both artists allows the words a power equal to the visual aspect. In *Idea*, two columns of text are divided by a tenuous, wavering, vertical line. The left-hand column, given the underlined heading "INVENTORRY," is a list of defining facts about the world. The right-hand side is filled with Schlossberg's usual philosophical observations: "EVERYTHING TELLS SO MUCH BUT WHO IS LISTENING/AND WITH WHAT EARS/BRAIN/EXPERIENCE." A single diagonal line in the lower left corner of the sheet and a

large shading pattern near the top left finish out this piece.

Listening mentions such writers and other creative thinkers as Maugham, Conrad, Joyce, Pound, Williams, Einstein, Stein, Niels Bohr, Orville Wright. *Lenses Patterns* includes a quote from the poet Wallace Stevens: "WHEN WAS IT YOU FIRST HEARD OF THE TRUTH, THE THE." In *Stillness*, Schlossberg replies to Stevens: "I MUST ADD ONE TO WALLACE STEVENS/THE THE." In Schlossberg's embellished writings, the writing, which is in the realm of philosophy, not poetry, far outstrips the visuals.

—Vincent Katz