

CHRISTOPHER GRIMES GALLERY

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Another group show that was truly fascinating was *Mr. Serling's Neighborhood* at Christopher Grimes. It was curated by Tom Patchett, a well-known collector and writer/producer. I spent an hour at the show with Chris Grimes and Diana Dupont, curator of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, arguing about the work of Keith Cottingham. He makes computer generated photos. One was of two young boys who could be twins, which is the title of the piece from his fictitious portrait series. He first makes models then does some magic with his computer using the models, photos, scanning his own eyes and eventually you have these manipulated photographs. The question is, if you didn't know this, what would you think? Is it just another pretty photo? Chris argued that all of art is basically seen on many levels and takes many different types of education to understand it. Diana and I thought that you need to "be on the inside" to understand these photos. Is that true of all professions? The outside world perceives it differently than those in the inner circle who understand the language. Not everything in the show was quite so thought provoking but there were really interesting selections from Elizabeth Olbert, Maryland Blake, Mike Kelly, Kiki Smith, and Megan Williams (two names that have appeared regularly when feminist art is mentioned).

I was sorry I had to leave the gallery and the discussion but I had a prior lunch date with artist Lita Albuquerque

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Art



"Young Couple, South Bronx, NY" (1987) is Mary Ellen Mark's impression of love amid hopelessness.

an act of bone-crunching contortion, her puppy resting between her head and her foot, brought into uncomfortable proximity. Her unnatural pose serves as a symbol of survival: to get through the day, you have to twist yourself in knots.

The CCAC is at 5212 Broadway at Clifton in Oakland. Gallery hours are 10-4, Monday through Saturday.

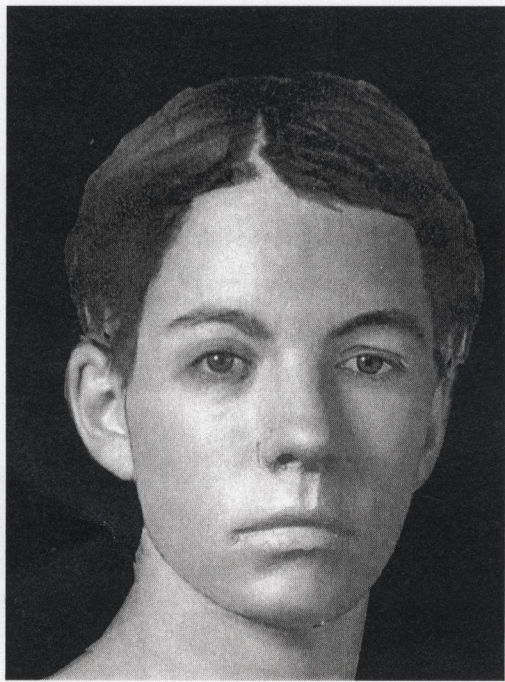
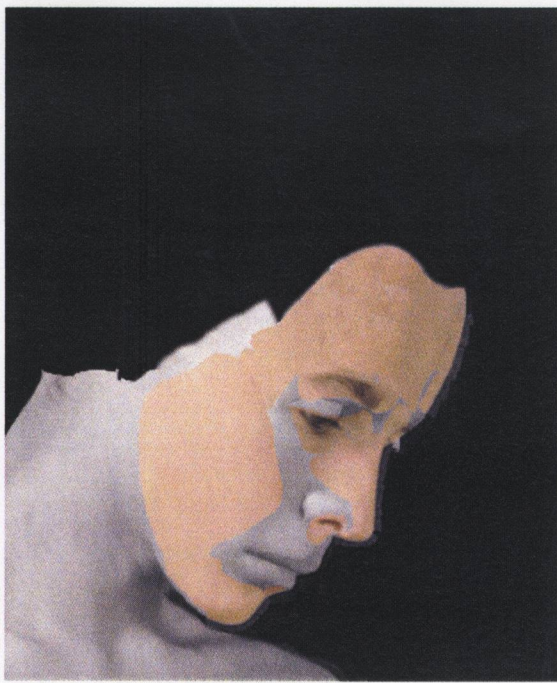
The Rena Bransten Gallery, 77 Geary St., has up (through July 17)

a photo show that nicely complements the Mark retrospective. The annual photography survey curated by gallery staffer Calvert Barron, this year titled "Gesture and Nuance: The Photographic Portrait," the exhibit focuses on the face; Barron says she was specifically interested in images that established eye to eye contact between the subject and the viewer.

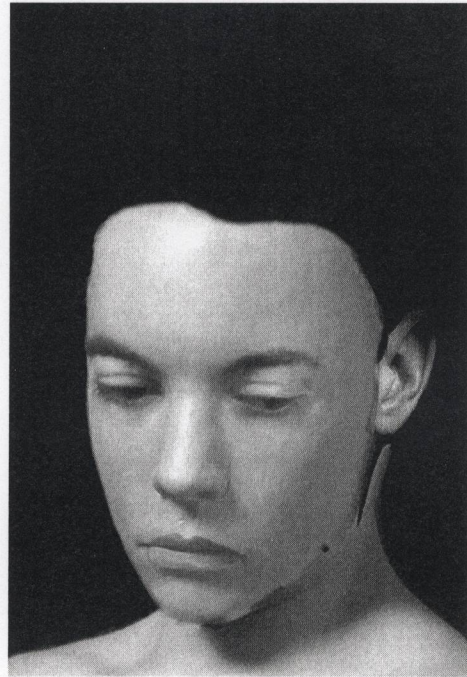
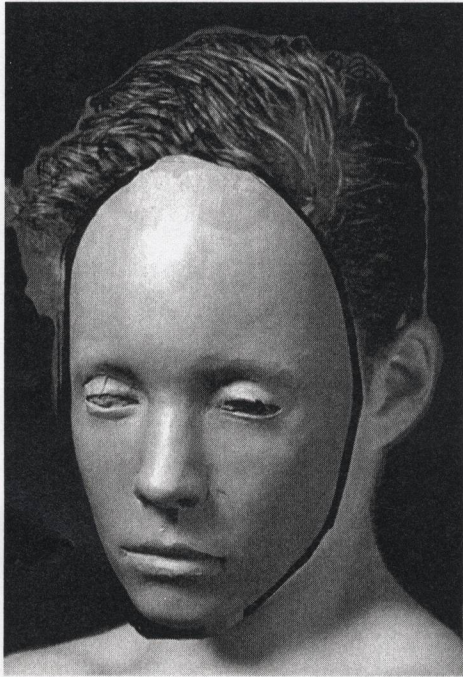
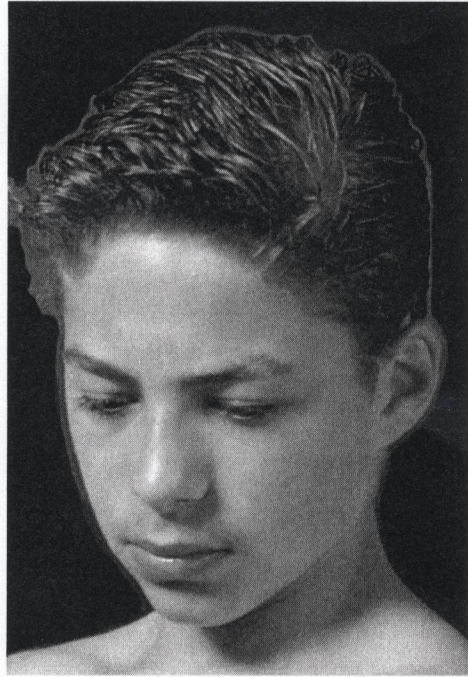
Barron has assembled some 50 prints that range from the familiar street photography of Lee Friedlander, Arbus (three frightening

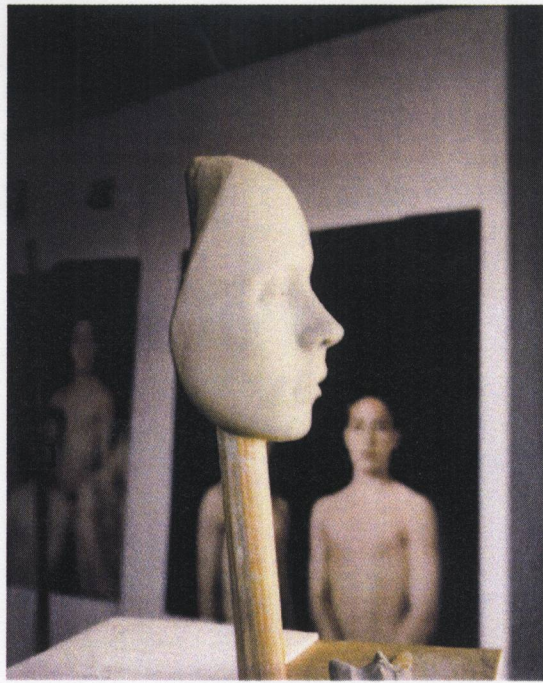
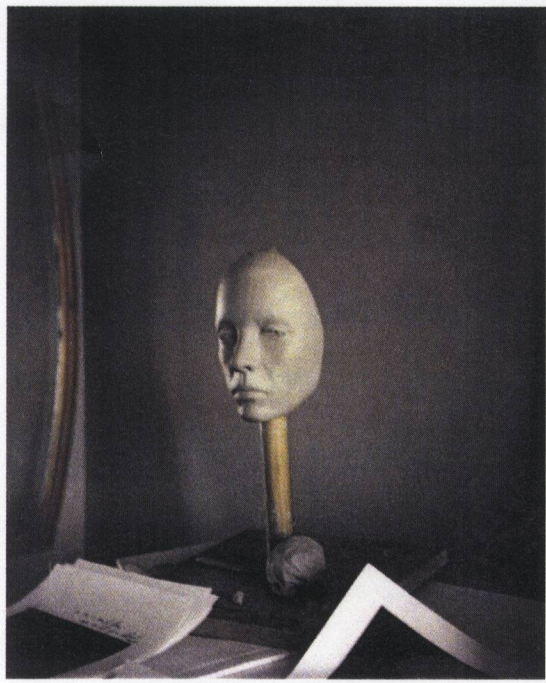
portraits of New York women) and Danny Lyon to up-to-the-minute post-modern explorations of identity, convention and genre by Thomas Ruff and Clegg & Guttman. Particularly interesting are family portraits of Roman aristocrats by Patrick Faigenbaum, which critiques the formal portrait genre, and the digitally constructed images of Keith Cottingham, in which the androgynous subject might be really an android, but a disturbingly reasonable facsimile of the boy/girl next door.

KEITH COTTINGHAM



Studies for "Fictitious Portraits" Keith Cottingham 1992©





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