



View of Elise Siegel's *24 Feet* (foreground) and *21 Torsos* (background), both ceramic and mixed mediums, 2004; at Garth Clark.

expectantly toward the gallery's door—Siegel virtually disabled cynicism by plunging viewers straight into a total immersion in childhood. This kind of psychological quarantine was imposed even more forcefully by *21 Torsos*, the other installation on view here (both were completed in 2004). In diametric opposition to the linear rectitude of *24 Feet*, here 21 little monsters were engaged in fists-flying mayhem. Shown sans legs, raised off the floor on wheeled metal stands, they formed an unstable cloud of silent strife. As with the girls in *24 Feet*, each figure is individualized, though they share basic features: cropped hair makes them boyish; they look roughly seven or eight years old. Tight-fitting sleeveless T-shirts make their bodies seem all the more tender. Their pudgy little hands are variously balled for punches, or raised in preparation for an opened-handed smack, fingers spread wide. Some reach forward, and many come close to contact without ever consummating the aggression; again, as with *24 Feet*, no two figures ever quite touch. Facial expressions range from quizzical to actively belligerent—most mouths are grimly shut, or slightly opened in thin-lipped scowls. But their raised eyebrows, small, deep-set little eyes and pale, doughy skin lend

these children an air of vagueness, even helplessness: they seem somehow unsure about how they've wound up in this angry, irresolvable muddle.

That uncertainty is enhanced by the figures' postures. Tipped slightly forward, their backs arched and rear ends a little raised, heads just slightly inclined toward each other in groups of two or three, they could be putti in a ceiling painted by Tiepolo; only the wings are missing. Or, they could be juvenile versions of the teeming naked fighters in the famous engraving by Pollaiuolo, all arms raised, every martial posture illuminated. —

It's harder to find contemporary comparisons for Siegel's work. Judy Fox's suavely seductive painted-clay children come to mind, as do Kiki Smith's cast-bronze figures drawn from fairy tales. But in Siegel's pieces, there's no allegory.

No secondary language of psychological symbolism is at work. Rather than serving as ventriloquists' puppets for adult expression, Siegel's children seem to speak only for themselves. Leaving us thereby at a loss for words is not the least of their provocations.

—Nancy Princenthal

Lucy Slivinski at Phyllis Kind

For her first New York solo exhibition, Chicago-based sculptor Lucy Slivinski made use of a variety of industrial materials by performing the orderly repetitions associated with weaving and crocheting, at a larger scale and minus the tools and materials generally associated with those tasks. Her process-driven works result from the manipulation of wire, nails and chains ornamented with bottles, strips of clothing and other found objects. Each sculpture seems held together by the disparity and affinity of its elements and by Slivinski's ability to physically shape apparently intractable materials. A few have the finely crafted look of woven

vessels or traps that bring Martin Puryear to mind, while others have the electric, teased-out massing and airy volumes associated with Alan Saret. They are locked in by the tension invested in the process of ordering things to do what they are not by nature inclined to do.

Yellow Shadow (2004) is a vessel form made up of an exterior of welded steel and an internal basket of crocheted steel wire. At 4 by 5 by 4 feet, with the look of things that tumble, the yellow-painted exoskeleton resembles the sort of metal cage used to protect lightbulbs. However fine the wires of the interior basket are in comparison to the exterior cage, the two parts echo each other in form. Slivinski is interested in the playful incongruity of elements, and in much the same manner she adds an unlikely technique: strips of knit sweaters are subjected to a fabric-making process used to bind matted, compressed fibers, and the results are interwoven in the crocheted steel. In *Thinking* (2001, 56 by 24 by 24 inches), a crocheted openwork of rusted wire bursts from a metal drum.

As much nest as basket, *Pulse* (1997) is an open cylinder composed of hundreds of short, hooked, rusting steel rods piled in layers as in a structure framed of popsicle sticks or like the coils that can make up the walls of a pot. At 6 feet high and more than 5 feet in diameter, *Pulse* seems filled with an ambient gallery light that pierces its outer wall. As though to introduce more light, Slivinski adds a chandelier of clear one-pint glass bottles suspended from the ceiling at the

end of a rusty chain dangled into the maw of the steel-r basket. The bottles that raft from the chain at the mouth of the basket are wrapped in cheted sleeves of thin, rus wire, while those at the bottom without a jacket, are by common both clear and incandescent. In all, the work is smart, and handsomely made.

—Edward Latta

Jene Highstein at Anthony Grant

Jene Highstein's six new sculptures (all 2004) at Anthony Grant were carved in Sweden on local granite and quartzite. Preparatory watercolors executed during 2003 (and also completed during 2004) show the artist exploiting swirling motions of tornadoc monochrome washes over rough, curved lines of graphite. These drawings convey a softer, more dynamic, open transparent form than was achieved in the works carved of stone, highlighting the detail that takes place when an idea is translated from one medium to another.

Although the sculptures, massive and floor-bound, their relation to the space they inhabit can vary markedly. The forms work in the "Tornado" series more or less funnel-shaped, teetering between abstract and figuration, suggest spiraling movement. The squat, faceted granite "Dangerous Object" seem to press upon the ground with all their weight.

The artist tricks us for a moment into believing that solid mass of *Dangerous Object* (External), 2&A by 38 by 30

Partial view of Lucy Slivinski's *Pulse*, 1997, steel chain, steel rods and bottles 72 by 64 by 65 inches; at Phyllis Kind.

