

ARTnews

Nayland Blake, Richmond Burton, Peter Cain, Gary Hume

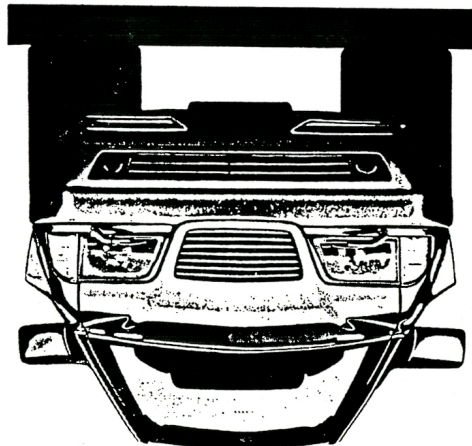
MATTHEW MARKS

The works in this show by four accomplished artists contrasted sharply in style and focus. The strongest pieces, Nayland Blake's assemblages and Peter Cain's painting, generated the most cross-talk through their affinity for psychologically charged imagery. Less inventive but sure in touch and color, were Richmond Burton's abstract paintings. Their lack of irony, however, seemed to isolate him in this context. Gary Hume's frieze, replete with hard-edged geometry, was playful, but came off as overconceived and underworked.

For Hume's piece, five different size rectangles rested upright on a shelf. Painted in a shiny impasto of tasteful postmodern shades, the panels read as Conceptual pieces masquerading as paintings. Burton's canvases, on the other hand, revealed an artist genuinely involved with painterly issues. In *Curling Flower Spaces*, large blue daubs of juicy paint crisscrossed the coral-red underpainting in a loose diagonal grid. Although the color had some life, it was Burton's attention to his marking that made the work sparkle.

Unlike Burton, Blake emphasized the symbolic over the optical in his four constructions. A wall piece made of sticks, plastic flowers with leaves, and a leather thong, *Bouquet #4*, was at once delicate and disturbing in its juxtapositions. More disturbing still was Cain's car painting *500 SL #2*. Echoing Rosenquist's Pop art abstractions, this piece adds a whole new layer of associations to the subject as an image of a skull emerges from the picture, with the headlights serving as the eye sockets, the grille as the nose, and the windshield as an empty grin.

—H.B.



Peter Cain, *500 SL #2*, 1992, oil on linen, 67 by 70 inches. Matthew Marks.