

# Lacquered labels, found photos, terrifying tots

## GALLERY GOING

GILLIAN MACKAY

also lovely, although more predictable. *Closes today. \$3,300-\$15,000. 33 Hazelton Ave., 416-920-3820.*

### here at Robert Birch Gallery

Kudos to dealer Robert Birch for allowing Michelle Jacques to assemble this small, lively show of five emerging artists: Jill Ballard, Shary Boyle, Clint Griffin, Anna Jane McIntyre and Kelly Richardson. Although disparate in methods and aims, they share what Jacques calls an intense energy in their approach to art. These artists aren't worrying about careers yet. They create in an elemental way, says Jacques, a curatorial assistant at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Immediate experience informs the daily drawing practice of Anna Jane McIntyre, whose spidery, whimsical etchings recall, among other sources, Native Indian ledger drawings; Shary Boyle's white-on-black gouache portraits of grief-stricken women also suggest a kind of cathartic release. Jill Ballard builds dioramas around her fantasies of predatory, sexual encounters, and then photographs them. In *Flat Black 1969 Z-28 Camaro RS, 1997*, the artist herself is raking leaves outside a suburban house; a racy-looking black car in the driveway threatens or promises to take her away. More impersonal but equally absorbing are Kelly Richardson's serial photographs of lit-up subway tiles taken with a disposable camera, and Clint Griffin's spear-like stack of 164 tiny, colourful cars clipped from found photographs. *Until March 6. From \$70-\$800. 241 King St. E., Toronto. 416-955-9410.*

### Clint Griffin at Mercer Union

This young Toronto artist's unorthodox practice originates with frequent trips to the trash bins outside his local photo shop. There he scoops up boxfuls of discarded photos which provide the raw material for his extraordinary collages. For his works at Mercer, Griffin chose crowd scenes. He cut away the bulk of the original photo, leaving only tiny human figures floating in a sea of ragged white photo paper. He meticulously stitched the papers together with a sewing machine and stapled them to the wall. In a small piece, entitled *line*, figures no bigger than shards of glass are aligned in a vertical column that hangs down from the bottom of the paper like the tail of a zipper. In the much larger work, *leaving room for movement and making room for movement*, thousands of thumbnail-sized people are lined up on a horizontal axis at eye level in a flattened elliptical loop that extends the length of an entire wall. A snowy coat of sketchily applied white paint swirls around the Lilliputians who, on close inspection, are gathering for parades or team sports but en masse appear to be part of a giant migration. The obsessiveness of Griffin's methods inevitably call attention to themselves. But not, in the end, to the detriment of the work, which evokes a curiously inspiring picture of humanity marching into the millennium.