

## ART IN REVIEW

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### **Dennis Kardon**

*Mitchell Albus*

*511 West 25th Street, Chelsea*

*Through April 3*

If you could see into the murkier corners of the mind of the middle-aged antihero in "Curb Your Enthusiasm," you might find images like the ones in Dennis Kardon's paintings. Having progressed from abstraction in the 1970's to hyperrealistic close-ups of body parts in the 1980's, Mr. Kardon has lately been making generously painterly, voluptuously creepy narrative pictures of familial conflict, sexual angst and infantile yearning in colors ranging from muddy to steamily glowing.

Some of Mr. Kardon's fantasies are absurdly childish wish fulfillments: a man enjoying a marijuana cigarette with two naked women, for example. But in most cases there is a mood of humiliation, frustration and abjection. "Roughhousing (With the Inner Child)" depicts the artist himself, with glasses askew, holding down an enraged, unruly child — an at-wits'-end scene that may be familiar to some parents. Taking a feverishly hallucinatory turn, his most recent canvas includes a miniature half-nude girl lounging on a phallic-stemmed mushroom inside a bubble, which has, it appears, an attached nipple on which a baby is sucking.

Comparisons to John Currin and Eric Fischl come to mind. But while those artists have developed facile, quasi-masterly techniques, Mr. Kardon continues fruitfully to struggle simultaneously with the viscous inertia of paint and the embarrassing muck of his own psyche.

KEN JOHNSON