

Ricci Albenda at POSTMASTERS, 10 February–8 March  
 Rita Ackermann at ANDREA ROSEN, 19 January–24 February  
 Dennis Kardon at RICHARD ANDERSON, 13 February–31 March



clothes are knocked-in with hurried directness. In *...And I Can Walk on Fire...*, the white paint that depicts the snowy foreground laps up to the painting's surface as it recklessly cuts in-between the boy's knapsack and jacket. He poses, about to throw a snowball back into the dramatically recessive space. The schematically painted distant hand seems either to hold the dioramic background away from us or merge into it. He is enjoying both throwing that snowball and performing a sight-gag for the occasion of being photographed. As such, one can imagine the image as a burlesque of the artist's paint-throwing relationship to her pictured fi-



Dennis Kardon paints in a mode very close to his subjects. His method of working from observation resembles a nineteenth-century practice, but his subjects are in distinctly contemporary domestic settings. Kardon's contribution to the formidable genealogy of figurative painting is inflected by the culture of psychotherapy and psychological fiction. In paintings like *My Love* (1996), details of dress and décor are positioned to reveal behavioral minutiae. Kardon portrays himself as entangled in the complications of marriage, parenting, and self-scrutiny. Symptoms and anxieties are the engines that drive his narrative machine through the pungent intimacy of deeply inhabited spaces. If Albenda's hypochondriacal self-scrutiny is psychologically reserved, Kardon's blossoms with interpretive solicitations. The labored working-out of his depictions resonates as an effect of working-through the embarrassments and disappointments of a life. And while Ackermann's relationship to her subject is protected behind the conventions of photography and the threat she issues in her show's title, Kardon catches himself with his drawers down. He stages his own vulnerability and spotlights it with hints that even "painting from life" can be a source of embarrassment.

which perception is inflected by our body and brain, ways in which the eye and the mind guide their mark-making hands to define an image. The critic Michael Taussig observes that the "mimetic faculty carries out its honest labor" in the irrational hope of sympathetic magic, that the act of copying can resonate effects back to the original. Albenda's, Ackermann's, and Kardon's originals are each designed to reflect an aspect of their disparate selves. These painters focus their depiction-laboring gaze on subjects close at hand, perhaps to bear their imprint and magically affect them as people.

# people.

Dennis Kardon  
*My Love*, 1996  
 Oil on linen  
 72" x 60"

Rita Ackermann  
*...And I Can Walk on Fire...*, 1995  
 Acrylic on linen  
 52" x 34"

Ricci Albenda, 1996  
*people (left eye at 25 feet)*, 1996  
 Oil on canvas  
 32" x 47"