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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Juan Sánchez**

***RICANSTRUCTIONS: Paintings of the 90s***

On View December 19, 1999 – February 13, 2000

(Long Island City, New York, December 3, 1999) - *RICANSTRUCTIONS*, an exhibition of works by Juan Sánchez, will be on view at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center and on line at [www.psl.org](http://www.psl.org) through February 13, 2000 with a reception Sunday, December 19, 1999. *RICANSTRUCTIONS* was curated by students from The Robert F. Wagner Jr. Secondary School for Arts and Technology, as a part of P.S.1's "Teen Curator Series." Over the past 2 years, Sánchez has been working with this group of teen curators at P.S.1 in a dialogue exploring his work. These discussions spurred personal reactions to the paintings in the form of written and visual responses from the students on P.S.1's website, culminating in *RICANSTRUCTIONS*.

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This unique opportunity was created by Teacher Michelle Kim, Technical Advisor Paul Johnson, P.S.1 Education Director Bill Beirne, Juan Sánchez and student curators: Delroy Binger, Tricia McCall, Ismaris Molina, Hasir Gonzalez, Perrin Wright, Anthony Vellos, and Liang Yang.

Timeline and Out-Of-Site student curatorial projects are funded in part by the NEA through an Education and Access Grant with additional support for Out Of Site from Bell Atlantic's Community/Technology Grant program, Citibank, and Con Edison.

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## Juan Sánchez

### *“RICANSTRUCTIONS: Paintings of the 90s”*

P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center  
December 19, 1999 – February 2000

#### CHECKLIST

*Mi querida mami*

mixed media on wood 1995  
Courtesy the artist

*Mi más bella flor*

oil, mixed media on canvas 1995  
Courtesy the artist

*Mi más bella flor II*

mixed media on wood 1996  
Courtesy the artist

*Rainbow Shell: Reconciliation with Father*

oil, mixed media on wood 1999  
Courtesy the artist

*Cries and Blemishes*

oil, mixed media on wood 1999  
Courtesy the artist

*La Colonia II*

oil, mixed media on canvas 1992  
Courtesy the artist

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*Confused Paradise*

oil, mixed media on wood 1995  
Courtesy the artist

*Manchas de sangre y lágrimas de cristal*

oil, mixed media on wood 1996  
Courtesy the artist

*Soy lo que soy (I am What I am)*

oil, mixed media on wood 1995  
Courtesy the artist

*flores para Malcolm X II*

oil, mixed media on canvas 1990  
Courtesy the artist

*Untitled*

oil, mixed media on canvas 1991  
Courtesy the artist

*Ya no hay más jibaros*

oil, mixed media on canvas 1994  
Courtesy the artist

*Aquí no hay luz*

oil, mixed media on canvas 1996  
Courtesy the artist

*Victoria de samotracia (Afro-Taina)*

oil, laser print and mixed media on wood 1996  
Courtesy the artist

*Mother and Child II: Is faith in myself enough?*

oil, mixed media on canvas 1991  
Courtesy the artist

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student works:

Ismaris Molina  
"Untitled" 1999  
mixed media  
Courtesy the artist

Liang Yang (Tangie)  
"Comments?" 1999  
audio piece, 60 minute tape  
Courtesy the artist

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**Hours and Admission:** P.S.1 is open from Noon to 6:00 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday. Admission is a \$5.00 suggested donation; \$2.00 for students and senior citizens; members free.

###

**For more information, contact:**

Juliette Cook, *Press Officer*  
P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center  
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Long Island City, NY 11101  
T: (718) 784-2084 / F: (718) 482-9454  
e-mail: juliette@ps1.org

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# PS.1

## Juan Sanchez - Biography

Born in Brooklyn, New York of Puerto Rican parents, Juan Sanchez graduated from the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in 1977 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. In 1980 he received his Master of Fine Arts degree from the Mason Gross School of the Arts of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

Since the early 1980s, Sanchez's artistic practice has merged aesthetic innovation with political activism to create works that fuse painting, photography and printmaking with collage and other mixed media techniques evocative of the graffiti-poster covered walls found in such urban centers as New York and San Juan. The term, "Ricanstructions" was borrowed from a 1977 recording by the great salsa and jazz percussionist Ray Barretto. Its use signifies Sanchez's desire to deconstruct the devastating social effects of colonialism in order to uncover and repair aspects of Puerto Rican culture from both diasporic and personal perspectives.

As an undergraduate art student, Sanchez studied under painter Charles Seide, photographer Eugene Tulchin and combined media artist Hans Haacke. Puerto Rican artists and photography groups such as Taller Boricua and En Foco impacted and influenced Sanchez's art. In 1978, he became an activist for Puerto Rican independence, the struggle to get the U.S. Navy out of the island of Vieques and for the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners. In 1984 Sanchez helped to organize the mass mobilization "Artist Call Against United States Intervention in Central America." A national event involving a large community of Latin American artists in addition to Robert Rauschenberg, Louise Bourgeois, Kiki Smith, Faith Ringgold, Claus Oldenberg and Lucy Lippard among others. That same year, Sanchez assisted in the national organization "Art Against Apartheid" as well as the anti-nuclear arms movement.

As an MFA candidate at Rutgers University, Sanchez was strongly influenced by Leon Golub, Robert Blackburn and Melvin Edwards. In 1980 Sanchez was selected for the exhibition, "Young Painters: 1980" by recommendation of Leon Golub and in 1981 Melvin Edwards selected Sanchez for "Events: Artists Invite Artists" at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, launching his exhibition career. Three years later, Sanchez received two fellowships in painting: The National Endowment for the Arts and the Creative Artist Programs Service (CAPS). Sanchez is a 1988 Guggenheim Fellow in painting. His work can be found in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Museum of Modern Art and El Museo Del Barrio, among others. Presently his work is being exhibited in "Juan Sanchez: Printed Convictions: Prints and related Works on Paper," a two-year traveling exhibition accompanied by a color catalog. "Printed Convictions" is on display at El Museo Del Barrio through January 9, 2000 and was curated by Alejandro Anreus of the Jersey City Museum. Since 1990, Juan Sanchez has been a professor in the Department of Art at Hunter College.

**Previous solo exhibitions include:** EXIT ART, New York, NY, "Juan Sanchez: RICAN/STRUCTED CONVICTIONS," 1987; University Art Museum, State University of New York, Binghamton, "Juan Sanchez: Rican/Structured Realities," 1991; 5th Habana Bienale, Habana, Cuba, "Juan Sanchez: Exposition Individual," 1994; The Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, San Antonio, TX, "Rican/Structions, Prisoners of War," 1995; The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, NY, "1898: RICAN/STRUCTURE: MULTI-LAYERED IMPRESSIONS," 1998; Jersey City Museum, Jersey City, NJ, "Printed Convictions," 1998-99.

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New York

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ART

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P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, through Tue 13 (see Museums).

For a while there, Juan Sánchez's exhibition of paintings at P.S. 1 was overshadowed by the two headlining exhibitions that opened alongside it: "Children of Berlin" and "Minimalia" (now over). Both shows emphasized conceptual concerns over personal ones, and not always that successfully. Which is not to say that Sánchez's more visceral paintings are the be all and end all of art; rather, they give you something to chew on.

The term *Ricanstruction* comes from the salsa musician Ray Barretto, who coined it in 1977 to show his social commitment as an artist. For Sánchez, the term serves the same purpose. In addition to evoking his concern for reconstructed histories, most evidently the cultural history of Puerto Rico, Ricanstruction also conveys the sense of Sánchez's art as a kind of fusion—a cutting and mixing. His paintings are illustrative, expressionist works that combine aspects of drawing, photography, poetry and collage.

This melding of different sources calls to mind graffiti and the décollage work of Mimmo Rotella, as well as the more recent work of Raymond Saunders.

Often dedicated to individuals and shaped in the form of shrines (as in one of the show's best, *Rainbow Shell: Reconciliation with Father*), some of the paintings never get past an affectation of spirituality that at times seems overwrought. Yet overall, Sánchez's work always remains engaging and capable of delivering an emotional wallop.

—Franklin Sirmans



Juan Sanchez, *Cries and Blemishes*, 1999.

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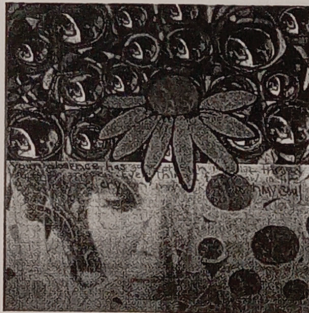
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Yes, it's the  
**Kids  
in the  
Hall!**  
Comedy's  
cult heroes  
renew their  
**ART**

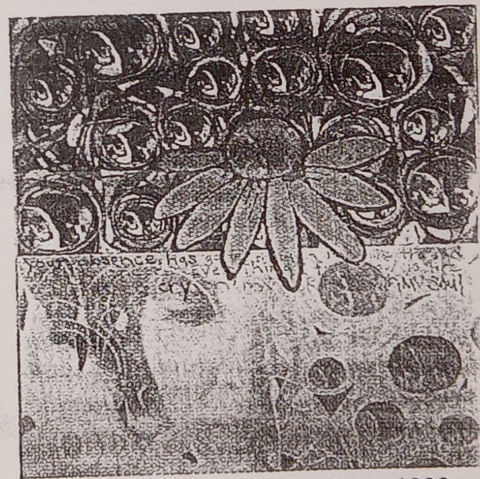
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Juan Sanchez, *Cries and Blemishes*, 1999.



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# Time Out New York

Yes, it's the  
**Kids  
in the  
Hall!**  
Comedy's  
cult heroes  
renew their  
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## Juan Sánchez "Ricanstructions: Paintings of the '90s" P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, through Tue 13 (see Museums).

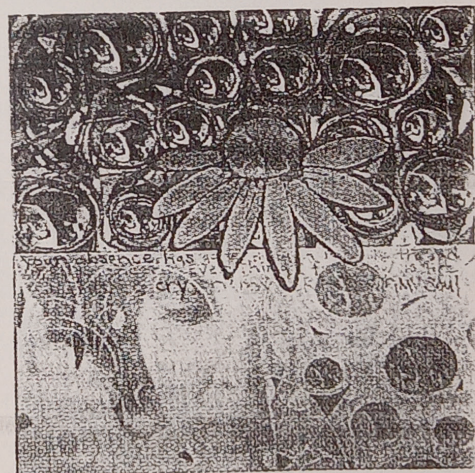
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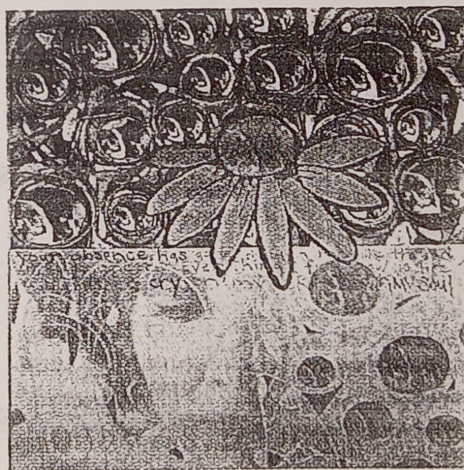
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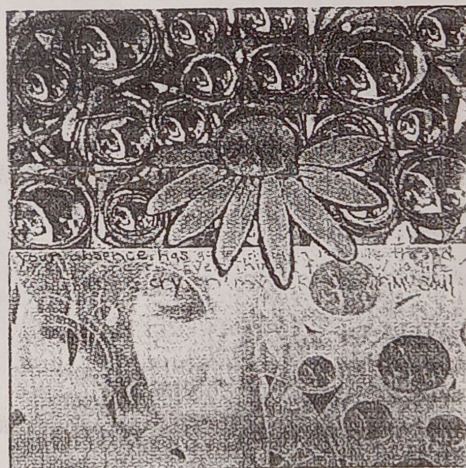
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Continued from Page E1

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 50 CENTS  
 Thursday, December 16, 1999  
 Tel: Newspaper of Astoria, Long Island City, Woodside and Sunnyside

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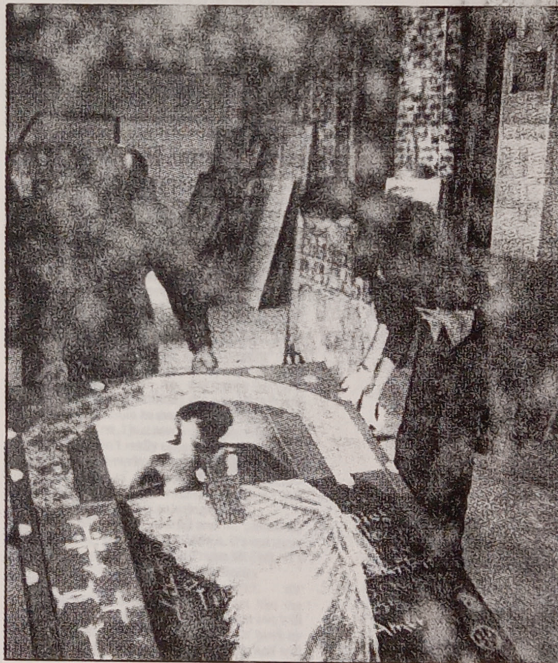
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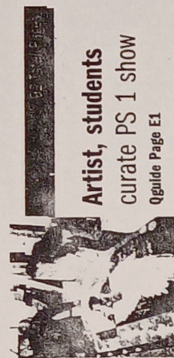
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# ASTORIA TIMES

Thursday, December 16, 1999



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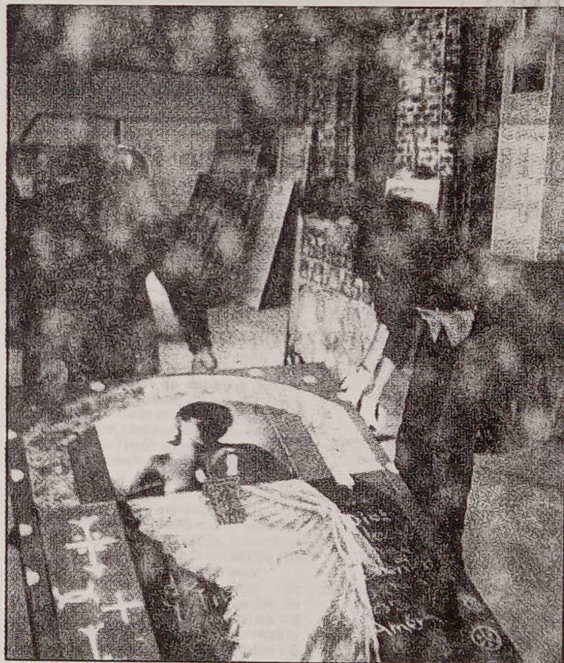
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Also through Dec. 19 at PS. 1, at 3 p.m. from Wednesday-Sunday, you can attend daily improvisational dance performances by Japanese artist Min Tanaka. In "Min Tanaka — Subject: Heuristic Ecdysis," the artist creates a new dance for each day he performs at PS. 1, each dance inspired separately and uniquely by the different rooms at PS. 1 in which each dance will be set.

In addition, new artwork by three artists will be featured through the museum's ongoing "Special Projects" installation, also opening Dec. 19.

PS. 1 Contemporary Art Center is at 22-25 Jackson Ave., Long Island City, at 46th Avenue. For more information, call 784-2084.

For more information about the El Museo del Barrio exhibit, call (212) 831-7272, ext. 113.

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U.S., at John Gibson, which consisted of 14 large-scale, luridly lit photographs and a sculptural installation titled *Crippled Memory* (1998). The sculpture included an antique wheelchair draped with a photograph of a nude silkscreened on latex; articulated mannequin hands hung from the armrests.

Coming from the world of fashion photography and record-cover designs (David Bowie, Marilyn Manson), Sigismondi is impelled by an aesthetic that might be characterized as Punk Gothic/Halloween Surrealism. The photographer goes to the limit in her use of dramatic lighting and shadows, dolls, masks, mannequins and medical restraining apparatus to get her outré color shots just right for glamour magazines. Her props include excessive makeup effects, prosthetic devices and sharp blades. She enjoys using dank "noir" locales (New Orleans is a favorite), decrepit insane asylums and other abandoned sites for her photo sessions. She is partial to the use of stacked lizards as headdresses, snakes crawling on bed linens, and a cow's rib cage as a pillow for the weary head of a child resting on a public staircase. She does not hesitate, divalike, to pronounce her vision "scandalous."

Clearly drawn to a Bataillean notion of Surrealistic excess that is linked to primitive expression of base physicality, Sigismondi

has a sense of the transgressive that is far too estheticized and formally manicured to be truly revolutionary or subversive. Apart from her close-up of a bloody carcass (*Meat*, 1997), and her chic renderings of body parts in formaldehyde photographed at the ever-popular Mutter Museum, College of Physicians of Philadelphia (as in *Hanging Face* and *Heart*, both 1998), Sigismondi is content to give her viewers campy, staged portraits of her friends dressed up like extras in an *Edward Scissorhands*-like film. Sigismondi's commodified vision of fantastic wardrobes, elaborate settings and ambisexual rock stars and models is meant for easy assimilation by the entertainment and haute couture industry that approves (and expects) spectacles such as hers that are (as the gallery press release states) "shockingly bizarre but always . . . beautiful." —*Dominique Nahas*

### Sue de Beer and Laura Parnes at Deitch Projects

The current craze among media artists for foraging among old films, new films and television shows for inspiration (masters of the form include Turner Prize winners Steve McQueen and Douglas Gordon) enters a new and gruesome phase with Sue de Beer and Laura Parnes's *Heidi 2*. Neither a critique nor an homage, the video projection is billed by the artists as the "unauthorized sequel" to Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelley's 1992 *Heidi* (it takes a team, it seems, to manufacture chic gore). De Beer and Parnes have reshaped the already ghoulish original to suit their own gender interests. The McCarthy/Kelley version was clearly a boy story, and this is very much a girl's. Neither will be screened soon on Nickelodeon.

First, a bit of history. When Chris Burden was shooting himself in the arm, Gina Pane cutting open her toes and Valie Export lacerating her cuticles in early '70s performances,

Paul McCarthy was ingesting and vomiting raw hamburger and stuffing sausages through the manufactured anal cavities of naked dolls (an image he revisits in *Heidi*). All of these extreme body rituals emanated from an international preoccupation with shock art that was aimed at awakening the art masses from their modernist naps. McCarthy, and occasionally Kelley, have kept at it, while others, like Burden, have "matured" into making boats and miniature replicas of Los Angeles.

Both *Heidis* take the famous coming-of-age story and turn it into a blood-bathed paean to the dysfunctional family, featuring Grandpa as a sex-starved child abuser and Heidi as a willing accomplice. Poor brother Peter gets the worst of it in both versions, what with his head being beaten against every available surface. The tearing open of Heidi's stomach at the end of *Heidi 2* so Mom can insert a television monitor atop the girl's intestines is a none-too-pleasant sight. Heidi, however, doesn't seem to mind.

De Beer and Parnes turned the back gallery at Deitch into a romper-room setting where viewers could sit on painted foam chairs to watch the two-channel, full-wall projections. Though filmed very low-tech with a hi-8 video camera, the large projections provide a filmic graininess that adds to the cinematic experience. *Heidi 2* follows the earlier formula of fragmenting the narrative of abuse and counterabuse into segments with titles like "Unsatisfied Want" and "Dissociation." Plastic mannequins, masks and repetitive actions create a sense of madhouse frenzy. Both *Heidis* make me think of Duchamp's *Etant donnés*, with the bride lying motionless and naked, spread-eagled on a bed of leaves. She's been resurrected in these *Heidi* chronicles. She's now defecating and vomiting her way into media history.

—*Michael Rush*

### Juan Sanchez at P.S. 1

"Ricanstructions: Paintings of the '90s," an exhibition of works by Brooklyn-born Puerto Rican artist Juan Sanchez, was curated by students from the Robert F. Wagner Secondary School



Sue de Beer and Laura Parnes: Video still from *Heidi II*, 1999; at Deitch Projects.

Floria Sigismondi: *Bound*, 1997, color photograph, 40 by 30 inches; at John Gibson.



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the tops of the paintings are arched, as if they were altars. These two pieces are about Sanchez's daughter; in the earlier work, a black-and-white photograph of an upraised fist is the center of interest. It is surrounded by commercial glossy pictures of saints, over which the artist has drawn outlines of hearts. In the later picture, we see a photo of a little girl wearing what appears to be a white Communion dress. These paintings border on the sentimental; they reject the theoretical, distanced, ironic outlook that is so widespread in New York's contemporary art world.

*Rainbow Shell: Reconciliation with Father* (1999), a mixed-medium work on wood, takes a particularly personal tack. A large rainbow-colored conch dominates the composition. Beneath it there is a text, which says in part, "he slaved 24 hours a day to put down steak on our table con platanos, arroz and beans." The painting includes a photograph of Sanchez's father as a young man, wearing a suit and standing beside a car; the work is clearly a lyric tribute to self-sacrifice that has resonance not only for Sanchez's own life but for a generation of New York-raised Puerto Ricans. Formally cohesive and memorable in their expressiveness, these paintings demonstrate the strength of a long-lived New York minority culture.

—Jonathan Goodman

### Sally Ross at Massimo Audiello

The paintings of Sally Ross combine the madcap, outlandish invention of fairy tales and cartoons with the control and skill of a traditional painter. This show—Ross's second at this gallery—included nine new oil-

Sally Ross: *Untitled*, 1999, oil on linen, 44 by 56 inches; at Audiello.



Juan Sanchez: *Rainbow Shell: Reconciliation with Father*, 1999, mixed mediums on wood; at P.S. 1.

on-linen works, all untitled. Perhaps the daffiest painting was one depicting a tree growing out of a rubber tire with red-and-white polka-dotted gumballs for foliage. With Magrittean deftness, Ross leaves it visually ambiguous as to whether this weird potted tree is resting on the ground or floating in the dreamy, Turner-esque clouds of the background.

In another picture of a tree, this time planted in the hollowed-out trunk of another tree, the sky looks as if a thunderstorm is about to erupt or has just passed over. Attached to the tree's skewed limbs are artificial-looking yellow blossoms, while four baby-blue petals lie on the surrounding brown dirt. Another work, depicting a lavender-blossomed tree rising from a chartreuse-green, polka-dotted planter, suggests a cartoon animator's version of a bonsai plant.

While the subject matter of these paintings may sound simplistic, Ross's virtuoso brushwork and feeling for color, as well as her surreal sense of humor, gives them a compelling presence. Noteworthy also is how their associations reach out from the domain of painting to such phenomena as clay animation films and the work of sculptor Charles Long. (Given the playful, childlike aspects of these works, it's interesting to note that this show was painted while the artist was nursing her infant son.)

Among the younger painters who share Ross's knack for combining old-masterish technique, surreal der-

ring-do and cartoony images are Alexander Ross (her brother) and Lisa Yuskavage. The work of all three serves to remind us that virtual reality is hardly the exclusive domain of digital media.

—Max Henry

### BALTIMORE

#### Karl Connolly at C. Grimaldis

In Karl Connolly's painting *A Matter of Time* (2000), almost the entire surface is taken up by a man's bare back. About 5 feet of reddening Anglo skin is painted to suggest an approaching sunburn with its inevitable blisters and peeling. It is not a pretty picture—but I could not take my eyes off it. The man's torso is widened and squashed, as if a source photo had been manipulated by a computer before the image was painted. The figure's elephantine compression and the raw burning hide are compelling and unforgettable elements.

There is a rawness to all of Connolly's big figure pieces, which are often silhouetted against bright white. The most successful paintings in the show are stunning, but several others try too hard to break new ground; the artist's strategies and distortions become a little too self-conscious. *Stretch* (2000), an abstract close-up of a bather, has nowhere near the power of *A Matter of Time*. In *Still Life with Frog* (1999), a single standing bather is awkward and stiff, without any of the con-

vincing tactile presence of, say, *Point* (1999).

For me, *Point* is the most realized of the figure paintings. It shows two women seen from above. The blue-white background, more than a neutral backdrop, interlocks with the figures. The depiction of the accurately rendered, blue-jean-clad women captures Connolly's edgy method, without the clamoring distortions. The riveting simplicity of the composition, coupled with the wary, yet defiant expression of the woman facing us, offer the artist at his best.

The large figurative pieces so occupied my attention that I almost overlooked a group of landscapes. Simple painterly studies of fields with trails running through them are presented on small panels rich with gray-greens and deft brushwork. I think they should have been in a separate room, away from the din of *Point* and *A*



Polly Kraft: *Grouper*, 1998, watercolor, 21 by 30 inches; at Addison/Ripley.

*Matter of Time*. This separation would have given each group of works an equal standing, providing a clearer appreciation of Connolly's range.

—Joe Shannon

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

#### Polly Kraft at Addison/Ripley

Like her friend Avigdor Arikha, Polly Kraft stands before nature to analyze and depict with swift authority the chosen image. The speed she employs is not meant to subvert the rendering, but to enhance it with painterly élan. The motif is drawn with a fast stroke; thick paint sweeps across the surface to evoke clouds or the beach, this fish or that peach. In this new body of work, we see

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*Rainbow Shell: Reconciliation with Father*  
oil, mixed media on wood  
1999  
Courtesy the artist



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Juan Sanchez  
*Cries and Blemishes*  
oil, mixed media on wood  
1999  
Courtesy the artist



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*Niña Veigante*  
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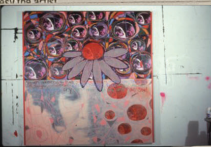
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Juan Sanchez  
1999 - 2000  
Exhibition:

"Ricanstructions:  
Paintings of the 90's"