

order is not political or moral; rather, her paintings are profound meditations on the process by which artistic inspiration translates itself into the work of art: the



Valerie Jaudon, *Heart of the Matter*, 2004, oil on canvas on board, 48" x 48". Von Lintel.

kaleidoscopic whirl of disparate pieces must be stopped so the tiny, fixed utopia of a painting can come into being.

Heart of the Matter (2004), with its brilliant play of color (the truly sensual element in her work), exemplifies her will to order. Not only does one fiery side replicate the other, but the entire canvas is itself a 48-by-48-inch square. The background mirrors the action taking place on its surface, where Jaudon has inscribed another symmetry. Instead of the smooth plane characteristic of her earlier work, her brushwork patterns here carefully crisscross one another atop enigmatic signs. These elements of texture do not disrupt Jaudon's surfaces—mirrors in her prior style—but, rather, constitute a species of signature, Jaudon's invisible presence. —Alfred Mac Adam

Charles H. Traub

Gitterman

This mini-survey of work by teacher and activist Charles H. Traub—23 pictures taken between 1983 and 2003—affirmed the kind of modest goals and sociable values that are rarely in evidence in the art world today. Armed with only a 35mm camera and a bemused nature, Traub roams the streets, beaches, stores, parks, and theaters of the world in search of moments and scenes revealing transitory human dramas. The people in his pictures are on stage, but they don't know it. Indeed, were Traub not there to record their clownish gestures and out-

fits, we wouldn't observe them either.

Presented in conjunction with the publication of his book *In the Still Life* (Quantuck Lane Press), the show overflowed with harmless visual puns. A man in a red striped shirt stands before the Orvieto cathedral, oblivious of the fact that he clashes with the striated stone. As a man and woman embrace on a Rio de Janeiro beach, a white poodle leaps up and wedges itself between them, insisting on a threesome.

At his best, Traub is alert to instances of the surreal lurking in the ordinary. The managers of a motel in Washington, D.C., may have intended the basket of fruit on the bed and flowers on the nightstand as a gracious touch, but instead, the place looks like a funeral parlor.

Robert Doisneau and Elliot Erwitt became masters of this genial style in the



Charles H. Traub, *Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*, 1984, pigment print, 13" x 19". Gitterman.

1950s and '60s, and it is rarely seen in galleries today. Even if no one seems more amused by his own jokes than Traub—a fatal trait for a comedian—it is heartening to see an artist who doesn't care whether he is out of step. There is no posturing, hostility, or fake profundity in his photography. Traub is grateful for what the world offers. We can be, too.

—Richard B. Woodward

'The Landscape of the Body'

Walter Wickiser

The four painters in this show used a wide variety of materials and techniques in their large-scale works, but what most

distinguished their paintings was their close focus on the topography of the human body.

In the oil-on-rough-linen works by An-



Annette Rawlings, *Donatella*, 2004, oil on linen, 42" x 58". Walter Wickiser.

nette Rawlings, images appeared pixilated, à la Roy Lichtenstein. The hair and torsos of her cartoon-like women break down into panels of primary colors, creating a grid of various shapes.

Eric Finzi uses resin on wood to create pocked, lacquered surfaces, with the canvas beneath sometimes peeking through cracks. His blurred Victorian-photo-like portraits of groups and individuals tend to be murky, moody, and mysterious. In each image, the sitters' hands stand out, drawing the viewer's eye away from their bodies; it is perhaps the one body part that lends itself here to being loosened and manipulated.

Junqing Wu, clearly influenced by Warhol, paints in cross-hatched lines that seem to be scratched into small rectangular shapes, less

than an inch or so wide. Close up, they suggest the texture of a circuitry board. Wu's subjects—Cindy Crawford and John Lennon—appeared in oil on canvas rather than silkscreen. A viewer must move forward and back to link detail to mass, a technique we associate with the work of Chuck Close.

Though Keith Webster's method and materials rank as the most conventional, in this case, pastel on bristol board, his *Blue Toroscope-I* (2003) was the key to the show. Webster is the one artist who makes a clear case for the "landscape of the body." This blue torso moves with weight and light, sensuous and sculptural; and the density of color feels scooped out of the image of a reclining nude. —Elaine Sexton