



Michael Gregory, *Julgamento*, 1993, oil on wood panel, 41 by 44 inches. Nancy Hoffman.

esque tentacles and serpentine forms are initially jarring. However, Gregory has imposed order on these shapes, creating beautiful designs reminiscent of Islamic art and architecture. The fiery-red background of *Julgamento* (meaning judgment) is broken up by a dense pattern of interlocking serpent bodies suspended in a state of balance and interdependence.

It is this delicate contract of tolerance that Gregory explores so successfully in the exhibition. Though the symbolism is key to the paintings' strength, it occasionally overpowers the work itself. The more subtle and abstract his images, the more credible Gregory's Eden becomes.

—Olivia W. Douglas

## Daniel Goldstein

FOSTER GOLDSTROM

Daniel Goldstein's "Reliquaries" series makes a welcome contribution to the body of work addressing AIDS. Consisting of worn, charred-looking slabs of leather encased in black velvet-lined packing crates, these "relics" are actually leather bench covers taken from exercise equipment at Muscle System, a gym in the largely gay Castro district of San Francisco. Displayed in these luxuriously transformed containers, Goldstein's skins have a shroudlike presence, suggesting religious objects or retrieved anthropological treasures. The unaltered pieces vary in size according to the type of equipment they covered, and bear the imprints of thousands of bodies.



Daniel Goldstein, *Icarian I/Incline*, 1993, leather, sweat, wood, copper, and Plexiglas, 73 by 37 by 6 inches. Foster Goldstrom.

While religious associations are inescapable here, the luminous skins more potently evoke the cult of the machine-perfected body as a signifier of health—and as a mask for impending bodily decay. Gouged with scratches and holes acquired with physical contact, they commemorate a culture vastly shrunken with the onset of AIDS. Their ruined appearance also underscores a prevailing attitude of suspicion surrounding the body. Fringes of upholstery staples, suggestive of bent teeth or hair, add an anthropomorphic aspect.

These days, the artificial materials used on exercise machines resist imprints from pressure and sweat, evading signs of physical contact. But Goldstein's leathers contain their own historical record and mark the passage of a particular culture. The "Icarian" Goldstein uses in his titles alludes to Icarus, the mythical youth who died after flying too close to the sun, and more literally to the brand of "Icarian" gym equipment on display. While Goldstein's "Reliquaries" series is by nature limited in its conception, it is a meditative and important tribute.

—Sarah Bayliss

## Micah Lexier

JACK SHAINMAN

Original, polished, funny, sad, Micah Lexier's work thrives on a subtle balance between art and emotion. His surface gloss and wit distill profound concerns with identity and fear of both living and dying.

This elegant, powerful show by an artist well known in Canada but not familiar enough in New York took viewers from tangles of fluorescent bulbs called *Portrait (Morrish Family, February 1992)* that spell out family names—the father's and the mother's in large piles, the children's in smaller ones—to installations of photos of friends and families, heterosexual and homosexual, stacked on the spines of books. These collective portraits try to give objective visual correlatives to age and experience.

In the photos the figures are graduated by

Several artists were among the winners of New York City's **Art Commission Awards for Excellence in Design**. So was former Mayor Dinkins, for his "unwavering support for the planning and development of New York City's built and natural environments." The artists were lauded for various public art projects throughout the city. **Toshio Sasaki** was honored for *The First Symphony of the Sea*, a wall relief at the Aquarium for Wildlife Conservation

in Brooklyn; **Fred Tomaselli** for his design for a piece entitled *Ten Kilometer Radius* at the New York Hall of Science in Queens; and **Robert Casilly** for a sculpted *Hippopotamus Fountain* in Manhattan's 91st Street playground. The awards were presented in the historic Public Hearing Chamber at City Hall. "In the world of design," Commission President Nicholas Quennell told the packed room, "when the going gets tough, the tough outshine themselves."

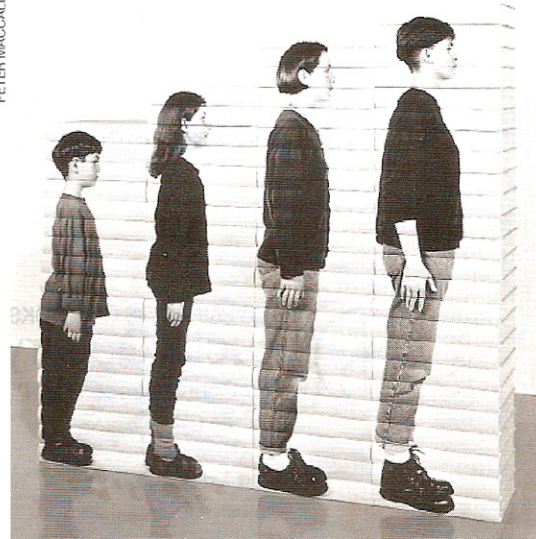
height. A picture can speak volumes, and Lexier's do, leaving the pages of thick books blank and allowing the images to grow up the stacks. His subjects are dressed similarly and they stand in the same pose, upright like children being measured against the wall. In the process they are being compared, how they measure up against one another, physically and humanly.

It is a measure of age, character, and time. In the standing pictures, such as *Book Sculptures: Family of Four* with the figures in profile, each person seems to merge into the next as in an ages-of-man series. Beneath the subjects' ordinariness and the sleek, controlled images is the nagging awareness of the inevitable march to death, striking some too soon, some not soon enough.

These variations on portraiture have the rare combination of accessibility and depth. The books are like age rings on a tree, though these can be moved about and removed, reminding us of the tenuousness of human life, that all stories—good and bad—come to an end.

—Barbara MacAdam

PETER MACCALLUM



Micah Lexier, *Book Sculptures: Family of Four*, 1993, photographs, cardboard, wood, paper, 72 by 72 by 12 inches. Jack Shainman.