



jeffrey rosen <rosen.ian@gmail.com>

Put It In Your Mouth / I'll see you on the dark side of the prune

matin momen <matin.momen@gmail.com>

Sat, Jul 23, 2005 at 6:01 AM

Reply-To: matin momen <matin.momen@gmail.com>

To: jeffrey rosen <rosen.ian@gmail.com>

Jeffrey,

Never have I felt particularly comfortable writing about art. Nor do I think I have found any writers on art that provide me much guidance. Basically, I look for context, a vantage point from which to view. Arakimentari, for example, however flawed, gave me a fingerhold on Araki who before then was rather impenetrable to me. I seem to root around for truffles in the mud rather than follow the thread of any argument. The Gerard Malanga essay in the Complete Works had some flashes in it that made me scramble back to the NY photos for another look. Otherwise it's in one eye and out the other. In a way, I prefer to listen to or read artists on their own work. Not that they have any more insight into the "meaning" of the works than other interpreters, but I enjoy their authoritative frustration (and joy) in getting thoughts and feelings into words and, by extension, into art. Most of the time my inability to verbalize what I see results in silence, albeit a very contented silence.

So, despite the impoverished writing that follows, please know that I had and have a lot of fun experiencing and thinking about your work.

Setting the Scene: Jenny and I rush into the gallery. The game was established on the sidewalks prior to entering: we would both pick which we work we thought is yours. I picked some rough looking xeroxes taped to the wall. I can't recall which work Jenny picked. We grab the list of works. Ian Rosen -- A work may be made available. Ok. Process of elimination. We go through, but all works accounted for in the gallery. Work matches the list.

"Excuse me" -- to girl sitting behind curtain with a lap top actually on her lap -- "which work belongs to Ian Rosen?"

"It's out there."

"Yeah, we know, but which one is it exactly?"

"Well, it's" -- girl makes waving motion with her hand -- "out there."

I walk away thinking this is part of the work: got to find the work by Ian Rosen. Jenny persists, "What do you mean "out there?" Could you be more precise?" Girl puts lap top computer aside.

Pointing to the list, "This is the work." Smiles.

"*This* is the work?"

Nods.

I am standing in the middle of the gallery, admiring the ceiling and the walls, looking at cracks in the paint to see if they are real cracks or art cracks.

Jenny calls me back. "*This* is the work."

And, in a split second, my mind whirrs, and I smile. I suppose one shouldn't smile at conceptual art, but I always wind up doing so. I just smile. From the presentation of a physical art object, to the questioning of that, still physical, art object, to the chipping away and re-championing of notions of art, craft, taste, style, intentionality, originality, authorship and the concomitant push and pull of The Concept and rule based art and obsessiveness, we finally get to where a work may be made available.

My favorite part is the "may." The text itself is not the art. It's not that the text has simply migrated from the wall to the list of works. It's the quiveringiness of it. And if it were made available? I guess then that it would be correct to say "a work has been made available."

So the three of us stand around exchanging looks. And the girl motions with her hands, "It's out there" and goes behind the curtain. And I say to myself, "Not quite true. It *may* be out there."

Weeks later it occurs to me that that's not true either. It's out there even if it's not.

[Quoted text hidden]