

SEAN LANDERS

LIKE A COMEDIAN, THE ARTIST DRAWS HIS MATERIAL

FROM HIS OWN LIFE

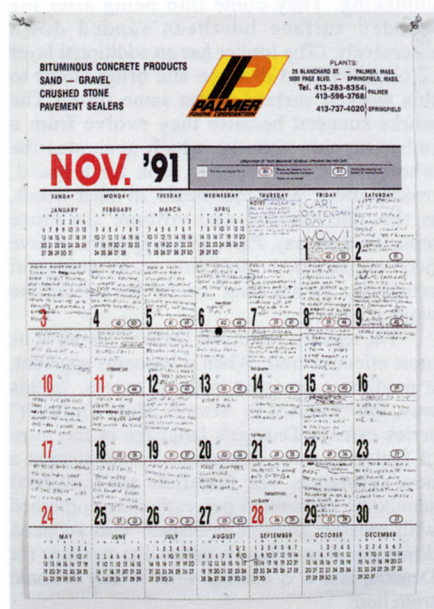


INSTALLATION VIEW (DETAIL), 1992.
VARIOUS CARTOONS.

Through the exploration of various media—writing, drawing, video, or terracotta sculpture—Sean Landers reveals the structure of narratives and the way they are constructed within an established communication process. Indeed, dialogue is informed by the acknowledgment of an interlocutor, and the resulting adjustment is marked in the course of this exchange of information. Depending on whom one interacts with, the discourse is shaped differently; some facts will be emphasized while others will be almost dismissed. In imagined correspondences with creditors or fictional recipients (e.g., *Letter to a Rock*), Mr. Landers accounts for his life in a constant intermingling of reality and fiction. His reality becomes fiction for the viewer, and somehow for himself: the narrator who tells his own



INSTALLATION VIEW, 1992.



CALENDAR PAGES FROM 1991 (DETAIL), 1991.
INK ON PAPER, 24 X 16" EACH.

story enacts its grounding in a fictional setting determined both by communicational necessities and their timely rendering.

This process of selection in the accounting of events brings up the notion of editing. Another fictional aspect of Sean Landers's work is this feeling of rough cut footage which the forms create. The video tape is bare, the writing is full of spelling mistakes, and, on regular pad paper taped to the wall, the mural diaries are chronologically ordered. It becomes obvious however that the self-consciousness outlined in the work is the fallacy of unedited thoughts. Before one even gets a chance to speak, the mind operates along specific lines which inform one's thinking. This "pre-editing" is generated by a social conditioning to which every aspect of education contributes, from religion to all other moral precepts and media.

Dealing more directly with the literary structures of fiction are the drawings on the art world, which somehow perpetuate the tradition of caricature. One thinks of such artists as Capiello or Toulouse-Lautrec, George Grosz

or Ad Reinhardt. The small terracotta heads are like a gallery of portraits/characters, their presentation evoking the trophies of shrunken heads displaying how certain "tribes" reduced their prisoners. These faces are those of anybody Sean Landers might have interacted with, from television hosts to passersby. These sculptures also seem to stand as the perfect artifact one would traditionally expect an artist to produce—yet another allusion to fiction.

Sean Landers has chosen to articulate his work around himself. Like a comedian on stage, he tells stories which always originate from himself: similarly, he anticipates and plays with the viewer's eventual reactions. But his stories could belong to anybody. The very loose form and presentation somehow evoke a link to performance art; the objects can be read as the props for the daily process of art-making, in a way blurring the private and the public lives of the artist. The gallery becomes an intimate and timely site of dialogue between the artist and his public.

Benjamin Weil
At Andrea Rosen, New York.