

R E V I E W S

NEW YORK

SEAN LANDERS POSTMASTERS

This is a fucking cool ass show. In the center of the gallery sit Landers' sculptures wrapped in rags and plastic, looking pathetic and expectant. The real show is on the walls, on sheets of yellow legal pad—Landers' "writings" through the voice of his alter-ego Chris Hamson—your basic downtown macho sculptor, preoccupied with his career, his genitals and being broke. Starring in his own real nightmare, he moves through the world of downward mobility in cinematic terms, cutting from shot to shot and thinking in voice-over. Hungry for food sex wealth glory as a "kick ass artist" and love, Hamson debates with God over his spiritual right to demand success in NYC or ignoble death rather than ignoble life as a "mediocrity": "I've been born into the middle, of the middle, of the middle and I'm claustrophobic."

Hamson struggles with the spiritual challenges faced by the unrich and marginal. A sweet reverie of nature worship, thanks to God and aesthetic megalomania is rudely interrupted when a creditor calls; we applaud as Hamson deftly puts her off the scent. Other highlights from the lifestyle of the broke and unfamous: fucking his sculpture and then himself, wheedling money from his mom, receiving rejection letters from galleries, getting "brutally" mastered by soft feminist sex "object," trying unsuccessfully to get free food, contemplating life, death and affluence while jerking off, and finally despair and orgasmic suicide.

The show demonstrates the magic power of Art to transform failure—erotic, financial, even aesthetic—into sublime success through the sheer power of expression, and representation in a Soho gallery. More than a Duchampian "act" of selection as art, or an existential gut-spilling session, Landers' chronicle of wretchedness and ambition, lust and humility, affirms the excess of sexual and ego urges—however abject and politically incorrect the content—that can't be contained or even sublimated into his sculpture. By exposing his "failure" (to be recognized as sculptor, lover, and consumer), Landers' writing makes a positivity out of the negative space between "failure" and "success." Like life. If that isn't inspiring, I don't know what is.

Rhonda Lieberman



SEAN LANDERS, ART LIFE AND GOD, INSTALLATION VIEW, 1990.