

Pick Of The Week

Potential art customers perpetually, and justifiably, complain that they cannot afford even the young artists carried by the commercial galleries. Often marking up the artists' price by 100 percent, a gallery can launch a modest drawing into the bracket of a major purchase. The relationship between artist and dealer becomes a hostile symbiosis at best, and the ambivalence of the artists' point of view is the subject of an exhibition now on view at the American Hotel. Craig O'Rourke, curator of the show, selected a variety of works that address the artist/dealer relationship, and while they range in price from \$50 to \$1,500, most are on the low side. Economics is not usually a consideration in a review, but in this case it's a reflection of what the artists themselves might offer without the gallery as middleman.

The most straightforward criticism of the gallery hegemony is offered by Jon Peterson. He posted a four-page contract with the Neil



Ovsey Gallery, which claims the right to be "worldwide agent with exclusive right to sell, rent, show or otherwise market the artist's work of art." As a relatively young and successful artist with an interest in representation by other galleries on the East Coast or in Europe, Peterson refused the contract and ultimately left the gallery. Another comment on the cavalier attitude of many galleries lies in Gary Lloyd's "Golgotha Pencil," a large pencil covered with pennies, which is chained to the wall beside the scrawled message "Returning your slides, sincerely. . . ." Ilene Segalove exhibits a black and white photograph of a pie divided by whipped cream writing into a "60/40 split," referring to the percentage of profit appropriated by many dealers. Janet Tholen shows an altar of partially melted candles, an offering to Catholic Saint cards bearing the faces of "art saints" such as the directors of MoCA, Arco Center for the Visual Arts, the Cirrus, Kirk deGooyer, Rosamund Felsen and Molly Barnes galleries. Tara Maria Fondiler is even more explicit in "Five Against One," a gilt framed expressionist canvas of a hand masturbating a penis.

Needless to say, all this criticism is on view in a new alternative gallery on the second floor of the American Hotel, right next door to AI's, 303 South Hewitt Street, downtown. You can't miss it. Out front is scrawled Randy Johnsen's graffiti "Valley Go Home" and "Death to Westsiders." At this time, the American Hotel is open by appointment only. Call Craig O'Rourke at 621-2279.

—Hunter Drohojowska