

L.A. WEEKLY AUGUST 7-13 1981

Pick Of The Week

Charles Garabedian's "Adam and Eve"



photo by Frank J. Thomas

California: *A Sense of Individualism* is an appropriate enough title for a pair of group shows curated by art historian Fred Hoffman. It is an educated and eclectic gathering of 14 artists with little in common other than California and an often irreverent humor. Walking through the door, you will practically fall over Ed Kienholz' "Non-War Memorial." Stuffed army uniforms lying about the floor like bodies are part of his still-unrealized proposal to plow under productive Idaho farmland and bury 50,000 clay-filled uniforms (500 bodies a day, seven days a week, for over three months) — the futility of war made visible. William T. Wiley's politics are clear in the wry text that accompanies his sketchy black and white painting and drawings: "... avoid taxes, sharpen axes, take classes to relax us, real axis..." The amusing neo-primitive style of Charles Garabedian is represented by esoteric narrative paintings of mythologies. John Lees' scumbled and shadowy portraits of his parents are an odd contrast to his extremely personable painting of a paintbrush. Three stages of Andy Wilf's works are on view — an early performance art painting, a diptych of animal parts from the Grand Central series, and his latest, most resolved — an impasto still life that borrows from irony and the Old Masters. Rarely seen works include three by the late Ben Talbert, including "Shy Betty" — a fur-trimmed mirror with attached douche bag (once considered highly offensive) and two erotic expressionist paintings by the late John Altoon. Also in the show are works by Wallace Berman, Chris Burden, Jess, John McCracken, Rick Stich and Peter Voukos. The show continues to August 22 at both locations of L.A. Louver: 77 Market Street and 55 N. Venice Blvd., both in Venice.

—Hunter Drohojowska