

ARTnews

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LOS ANGELES

Rob Wynne

ESTELLE MALKA

Butterflies were the leitmotif of Rob Wynne's exhibition. Images of colorful winged creatures were added to landscape photographs printed on textured silk fabric and embroidered on felt-covered frames, while the scientific versions of butterfly names were sprinkled in Latin on a wall behind the gallery's front window. The theme is appropriate to Wynne's sensibility. He has a light touch that seems almost airborne as he flits from one poetic thought to another, bringing viewers along for a captivating experience.

In all 18 works displayed, Wynne combined text with pictures, usually framing a computer-generated or found image with a phrase or sentence borrowed from literature. "Tell me whom you love and I'll tell you who you are," a quote from Lafcadio Hearn, was embroidered on a chartreuse felt-covered frame around the image of a purple human heart. Another Hearn thought, "Every firefly makes light for its own soul," ran around an orange frame on a photograph of a single lighted candle.

Some pieces made much more subtle associations between words and pictures. A lovely pale pastoral landscape, which seemed strikingly silent except for bright butterflies, was paired with a sentence from Jean Genet's *Deathwatch*: "If they can, the actors should deaden the timbre of their voice."

An artist for the 1990s, Wynne seems thoroughly at home with a wide range of media and methods, from high-tech computers to the sort of machine embroidery generally used for baseball caps and emblems. He also feels free to mine and recycle an array of visual and verbal resources. This could be a recipe for chaos or cacophony, but in his hands it isn't. He chooses carefully and weighs each element against its counterpart. The result is art that seems surprisingly pure and well considered.

SUZANNE MUCHNIC



**Rob Wynne, *I Shouldn't Be Here . . .*, 1996,
computer-altered photograph,
embroidered text on felt, 27" x 25".
Estelle Malka.**