

Rob Wynne, "You're Dreaming"

Holly Solomon Gallery,
through Thu 23 (see Soho).

Thanks to our era's celebration of tell-all tabloid journalism, the proverbial fly on the wall has seemed more omnipresent than even it could have imagined. In this smart, stylish show, the Baroque conceptualist Rob Wynne reinvents that hoary source of original spin as a kind of pied piper leading visitors through a very '90s tale—one that effectively marries cynicism to romance. Viewers will find Wynne's oversize ceramic flies ogling them from high up on the walls as they consider the other works on display in "You're Dreaming": cropped photos of 18th-century porcelain figurines borrowed from auction catalogs and printed on canvas; and a gallery full of delicate, hand-sewn thread drawings of surrealistic texts on vellum. The whole, as evinced by *Invisible*—a shimmering installation of handblown glass letters on a bank of sand heaped on the floor—is a daft materialization of repressed emotions and naughty ideas. It's also Wynne's most coherent visual statement to date.

The figurines are Meissen courtiers loaded with sentiment, but the artist has subtly appended to their sweet visages embroidered texts that give them fresh meaning. It's no wonder one pouffed and powdered lady looks startled; her finely arched eyebrows unexpectedly sport the words LOVE and HATE. Over the sighing, open mouth of another coy figure, Wynne has embroidered a perfect pink O of a smoke ring. These double-entendre thought balloons continually play hide-and-seek with the eye, revealing themselves only after a second glance. No longer piquant relics of another time, the figures become provocative little insinulators of modern critical observation.

Wynne's thread drawings are all over abstractions that process tangled webs of thought into speech, sampling aphoristic quips—from such historical figures as Maria Callas, Louis Arragon and Madame Tour du Pain (Marie Antoinette's bosom buddy)—as well as Wynne's own automatic writings. YOU WONDER IF YOUR LEG IS BEING PULLED, says one; BELIEVE IN ME AND I'M YOURS, states another. But I AM NOT LOSING MY TRAIN OF THOUGHT captures this enterprise most succinctly, since "You're Dreaming" reveals an artist fully in control of his—and our—senses.—Linda Yablonsky



Rob Wynne, *There Is No Artificial Paradise*, 1999.