

Time Out

New York

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“Projects '98”

Islip Art Museum, through Sept 27
(see Museums).

The Islip Art Museum really wasn't on the art-world map until a few years ago, when it began hosting artist projects in its handsome Carriage House annex just off the main building. As usual in this “Projects” series, the most effective installations are those that take their inspiration from the evocative site.

Karen Ostrom's looping film, for example, presents a bizarre-looking couple (both of whom are played by the artist) arguing in the building's stairwell like a pair of cranky ghosts. Lin-i Liu and Laura Teneycke's piece replicates the annex's roof in another gallery:

The viewer scampers up its sloping side to peek through false windows framing photos of such psychologically charged details as a bloodstain on white sheets. Lisa Hein has ripped out all the second-story window frames and jammed them through a single window as if the Carriage House were disgorging its own past in bulimic self-renovation.

The most resonant piece is in the bathroom, which Gary Cruz has painted a dull and uniform gray. Over the course of the exhibition, Cruz periodically lathers and shaves every inch of the room. One smells the lather and sees the stroke of the razor, but describing the process doesn't do justice to the weird sensation of being there.

Other artists don't fare so well. Paul Wong's *Lethal Immortality*—a gorgeous palanquin surrounded by archival photos—looks great, but this

commentary on the situation between China and Tibet doesn't quite work. Better is Chris Bors's *Modern Day Cave Man*, a video documenting the week Bors lived in the gallery dressed in cave-man drag. He ate takeout ribs, drank Bud, chain-smoked and did erotic portraits of P.J. Harvey on the walls. Goofy, yes, but I found it irresistible.

As a form, installation art is currently being hotly debated. *The Village Voice* declared it dead the same week the *Times* declared it superhot. If nothing else, “Projects '98” is a good way to see what the next generation of installation artists is up to, so you can make up your mind for yourself.—Bill Arning

Critic's picks

“Ahab's Wife”

Snug Harbor Cultural Center,
through Oct 4 (see Museums)

“Projects '98”

Islip Art Museum, through Sept 27
(see Museums)

“Figure Drawings”

Danese, through Sept 11
(see 57th Street area)

Group show

P.P.O.W., through Aug 21
(see Soho & Tribeca)

Jock Sturges

Yancey Richardson Gallery,
through Sept 4 (see Photography)