

**ELINORE HOLLINSHEAD**  
GREENBERG WILSON  
GALLERY

Elinore Hollinshead's paintings combine autobiographical and art-historical imagery in an investigation of memory and the passing of time. In the six paintings featured in this show, she integrates personal and collective symbols to create a complex layering of meaning, and an often cryptic interweaving of past and present. By making imagery from the past an important part of her memory-collages, she locates herself and her work on a visual time continuum. Hollinshead's references to classical, Renaissance, and Far Eastern art help her place her own experience in temporal and cross-cultural perspective. These paintings are evidence of the artist's struggle for control over her memory, in which haunting images are recalled and transformed.

*Brown to Grey*, 1989, is a triptych in which male and female classical figures appear in the left and right panels, respectively. The counterparts to these figures appear together in an interior scene, in which the artist paints herself and her lover reclining in a warmly lit room, a winter landscape visible through a window in the background. The cold classical figures painted in grisaille contrast with the two cozy figures in the center. Thus, Hollinshead weaves her life into a universal history. *Strange Fruit*, 1989, features a richly layered, symmetrically arranged group of panels. A double nude self-portrait appears at the center; from this radiates a collection of images and objects that refer to the artist's life and concerns. In the upper-right corner appears a black and white reproduction of Bronzino's *Venus, Cupid, Folly, and Time*, ca. 1546, an allegorical work with which the artist clues



Elinore Hollinshead, *Rashomon*, 1989, oil on panels, 60 x 96".

the viewer in to the larger meaning of her painting. Hollinshead has attached objects from her past: theater and concert tickets, shells, and stamps, all of which mark the passing of time. A fragment of poetry reads, "I wish I had not fled from you." All is unified by the branches of a large painted still life of dried flowers; a skull at its base acts as a memento mori. The painting is a totem of resurrected memory-fragments.

These paintings are marked by Hollinshead's impulse to fill every inch of surface with collaged monoprints, objects, and painterly detail. At first glance, each painting appears to be centered on its subject, which is surrounded by extraneous decoration. Yet these details are themselves central, and each painting's subject is in fact dispersed throughout the canvas. In *Garden of Love*, 1988, Hollinshead's all-over approach is most evident. The surface—rag paper bearing a combination of dried flowers both painted and real—is richly uneven. The evocative sensuousness of this painting reminds one that memory operates not only through sight, but also through such senses as smell and touch. The process of assembling tangible and abstract elements of memory might yield sen-

timental work in another artist's hands, yet for Hollinshead the art-historical references are surprisingly effective and work with the obviously personal ones until the two become interchangeable. This is especially true in *Rashomon*, 1989, another double self-portrait. To the left, the artist depicts herself classically idealized and contemplating an industrial landscape, while on the right she appears as a contemporary woman facing an overgrown landscape. The center contrasts a Japanese still life with a picture of the rock star Elvis Costello. African masks are superimposed very faintly throughout. Here the personal becomes historical, and the historical becomes personal.

It is no coincidence that Hollinshead's self-portraits are often doubled; they are representations, perhaps, of the self torn between past and present. The artist reveals an awareness of the pitfalls of historicist yearnings and the tendency to idealize memory. In the comic *Blue Birds Fly*, 1989, a romantic poet's suicide is interrupted by a woman dressed in blue feathers. Hollinshead seems to be poking fun at the plight of those who take the past more seriously than the present. These paintings are a fruitful integration of both.