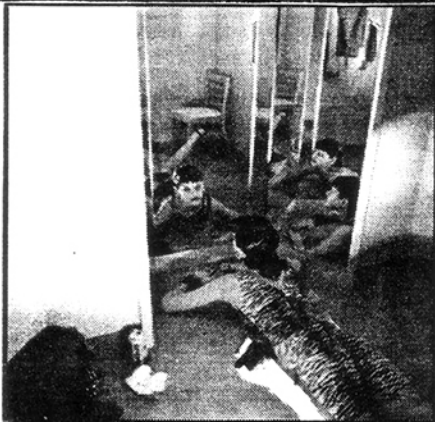


# LAWEEKLY

Tear-Out  
Ballot Guide  
on Inside  
Back Cover

FREE



London's *True Self Portrait 6*, 1998

ART PICKS OF THE WEEK

## LAURA LONDON, JODY ZELLEN

Whereas Laura London's earlier photographs reveled in their own artifice, mocking and queering the stylized, exaggerated images and claims of clothing and beauty ads, these latest, markedly more poignant shots emphasize the individuality of their subjects, middle-class adolescent girls acting and interacting at home or in public spaces. Still, it is clear that London has set up at least some of these photos, artfully but unsubtly violating the camera-vérité claim to documentary truth. London actually exercises a "truth" of another kind, the narrative, even novelistic truth of observed and recalled experience. Whether she is watching these teens or posing them, London is obviously empathizing with them, recording their re-enactments of the kinds of personal and social rituals that marked her own coming of age. London "documents" one young lady in particular, a punkish and photogenic gamine who hangs with her homies and struts her stuff in front of a clothing store's dressing-room mirror with equal grace, aplomb, vulnerability, girlishness, self-possession, etc. etc. The range of sensation she manages to project — or London projects through her — renders this mall-rat Audrey Hepburn the perfect modern-day everywoman-in-training.

Jody Zellen's photographic practice, conflating impossibly intricate urban imagery with cascade upon cascade of typographically diverse word and phrase fragments, is as far removed from London's as can be imagined — although Zellen's mostly black-and-white computer-assisted photomontages also make an issue of the photographic blurring of the seen and the fabricated. Zellen's layering of artifice is as disjunct and abstracted as London's is concrete and coherent, even banal; it does not record urban experience so much as exfoliate it, rendering its layers of sensation transparent so that they show through one another. Repeated modules, usually of architectural detail, and the syncopated visual (and verbal) rhythms of the rains of words, amplify one another through superimposition. Zellen sacrifices visual and verbal coherency for a more purely sensory logic, one whose optical cacophony is strangely alluring, even comforting.

Laura London at Works on Paper, Inc., 6150 Wilshire Blvd.; thru June 6. (213) 964-9675. Jody Zellen (with Richard Misrach) at Kesner, 164 N. La Brea Ave.; thru May 30. (213) 938-6834.

—Peter Frank