

**Dateline Brooklyn**

by Stephen Maine



Michelle Handelman  
*Twins Listening*  
Jack the Pelican Presents



Michelle Handelman's performance at  
Jack the Pelican Presents



Michelle Handelman's *Wiferfall (Let  
Down and Swallow)* at Jack the Pelican  
Presents

Over on Driggs Avenue, **Jack the Pelican Presents** recently hosted "This Delicate Monster," the first solo show at the gallery by Brooklyn-based artist **Michelle Handelman**. Known in some circles as the director of *Blood Sisters*, the 1995 documentary on San Francisco's leather lesbian community, Handelman achieved in this exhibition of photos and DVD loops a quirky, personal emotional resonance; the show approached an irrational, mythic complexity in its resistance of narrative resolution. The ensemble (all pieces dated 2004) takes as its starting point Baudelaire's *Flowers of Evil*, still crazy after all these years.

We're talking babes here -- provocatively clad, no less -- who hitchhike, spew liquids, change outfits, pair off and roll around in long grass, in the process embarking on some kind of fetishistic rite of passage. There's not much dialogue but plenty of sound: laughter, moaning, crickets, slurping, wheezing. Production values are high, which is no surprise, given the exhibition's lengthy list of collaborators, including costume designer **Garo Sparo**.

A series of confrontational performances was enacted at the gallery, but in the show itself only one piece had the compromised feel of a disused prop. Otherwise, the skewed narrative's claustrophobic, loopy self-referentiality optimized the gallery's awkward, funneling space. In *Twins (Folly and Error)*, the sweetly cathartic video in the back room, a pair of giggly, hippy Brunhildes frolic across a hillside meadow, laying to rest any question that the underlying mode is comic. Prices range from \$900 for smaller photos (in editions of five) and short videos to \$2,500 for the title work, a ten-minute triptych that includes both flowers and evil.

**Dawn Clements** shows terrific new drawings at **Pierogi** and in a concurrent show at **Felgen Contemporary** in Chelsea, both continuing into late December. . . . Brooklyn was well represented at the **New Art Dealers Alliance Art Fair** in Miami, Dec. 2-5, with **Prisca C. Juschka**, **Momenta Art**, **Plus Ultra**, **Roebling Hall** and **Schroeder-Romero** all setting up shop there. Concurrently, **31 Grand**, **Black+White** and **Jack the Pelican** were at **Scope Miami**, and **Pierogi** look on the big show, **Art Basel Miami Beach**.

STEPHEN MAINE is an artist and writer who lives in Brooklyn.

