

PO MASTERS

The New York Times

By ROBERTA SMITH

Aimee Rankin (Postmasters Gallery, 66 Avenue A, near Fifth Street): For sheer funhouse effects, it is hard to beat the small assemblage environments that Aimee Rankin concocts and then encloses in boxes with peepholes. Each is devoted to a particular emotion (fear, anger, desire, etc.) and derived from the postcard art reproduction at its center. All are chock full of cultural detritus, neatly arranged and multiplied through the use of small mirrors, and each comes complete with musical accompaniment brought to you by headphones. The ingredients in the box labeled "Fear" are mostly white, including two infinitesimally small sharks, each in its own bottle of formaldehyde.

In one sense this work is fairly traditional. It merely fine-tunes, albeit to a point of unusual precision, the assemblage esthetic that has haunted certain corners of the East Village for years. But you also can't stop looking at or listening to these things (at least for a while), and thus is triggered the attraction-repulsion effect that Miss Rankin seems to have in mind. The show is called "Ecstasy" and, according to the press release, written by the artist, "Ecstasy is not about feeling good." (Through April 5.)

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