

**"Anni Albers, Robert Beck,  
Cady Noland, Joan Semmel"+  
"Nancy Shaver: Black-and-  
White Photographs, 1975-77"**  
Matthew Marks Gallery, through  
Sept 10 (see Chelsea).

Maybe one reason the term *family values* has such a hypocritical ring to it is that everyone knows the domestic unit isn't idyllic. A child's primal scene for development and an adult's chance to reenact his or her own childhood mixes the terrible with the tender, producing the intimate but fraught sphere of familial relations. Artist Robert Gober is known for creating installation-size homages to these domestic dynamics. Here, he impressively does the same by curating the work of others.

Marks's front gallery has been turned into an arena of parental opposites. In Robert Beck's 1995 DVD loop *Untitled (The Spiked Buck)*, we see a man cutting the antlers off a severed buck's head. Shot up close against a rustic backdrop of wooden stairs and snow, the piece has a raw, dull sense to it. The man sawing grunts or coughs occasionally; the video leaves it at that, while the monitor itself



"Anni Albers, Robert Beck,  
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installation view.

sits atop a wooden table that recalls dad's old workbench. On the opposite wall, Anni Albers's *Black-White-Gray* (1927), a Bauhaus-era woven hanging, domesticates geometric abstraction with its square and rectangular patches in the title's subdued colors.

Temperamental contrast is the grist of two Joan Semmel paintings. *Touch* (1977) shows a nude man and woman in bed, with their limbs coupled sensually, their skin flushed with warm hues. *Intimacy Autonomy* (1974) has another couple lying together naked; this time, they're not touching, and their flesh is given an almost lurid pallor. Metaphorically linking all of these contradictions

together, Cady Noland's *Stand-In for a Stand-In* (1999) features a silver-painted stockade—a structure that would be imposing were it not made of cardboard.

As for kids, Nancy Shaver's photographs from 1975 through '77 of children's clothing with smiley faces, stars and "Junior Leaguer" emblems are certainly cute at first glance. But a darker undercurrent also runs through these props for dressing up a child's identity. Finally, Semmel's heroic-size *Bathing Andy* shows a young boy with a slight erection being bathed by a woman. It's a Freudian field day: one more piece to Gober's loaded puzzle of a show.

—Tim Griffin

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