

# ARTS

M A G A Z I N E

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Cary Leibowitz (Stux, September 8–October 6) is certainly a cute and funny artist. This full-gallery installation is a major step up from his previous show of magazine doctorings. A load of fabrication money has been thrown at Leibowitz, and, for now, he has made the best of it. The exhibit is Conrans-full of products from the Leibowitz line: banners, teddy bears, wallpaper, plates, rugs, floormats, baseball bats, and boxes. I am pretty sure that the next thing will therefore be—overdoing it. In the first room Leibowitz writes the graduate thesis for the collegiate train of thought in his art. His college is a literalized recoil from bookstore glee, a re-creation, by bouncing off merchandising, of a college life that never existed. The words on the banners broadside alumni-land with the suicidal finality of a snobby, self-proclaimed outsider who is really an insider. Though Leibowitz's subject matter is considerably gentler than Pruitt & Early's, the same double negative operates to implode feminist-style social and market critique. The demolition of an irredeemable social structure is touched off from the perspective of the within/without space that gay artists inhabit. It's Ivy League-type black humor: something like, oh, how I hated Yale (but Yale it was!); LIFE SUCKS, MISERY RULES, DROP DEAD. The banners secularize Mike Kelley's send-up of Sister Corita's Peace and Love promotions. Well, why not; as the man says, DON'T LOOK 4 ORIGINALITY. The wallpaper I'M A MISERABLE AND SELFISH PERSON is fun because it commercializes diary despair with cherubic truthfulness. Teddy bears adorably mascot the passion of higher education: I WILL MAKE A CUBIST PAINTING SOMEDAY BUT RIGHT NOW IT IS NOT IMPORTANT. Leibowitz's rugs or mats are instant classics. LOSER LINE FORMS HERE. I'm on it. THERE ARE 2 THINGS I NEED TO WATCH OUT FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE: MY WEIGHT AND MY RACISM. Me too. The WHINEY ASSHOLE boxes rebound off the impenetrable commercial patina of the thing to metastasize the remark as a trade-name-to-be. In the end Leibowitz's hold on an art gallery is transitional, angling already towards full franchise and production. I have one word for this particular graduate: plastics.

*Robert Mahoney*