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This 'Salon' is a Beauty

By ROB TAUBE

The group of artists that make up the Williamsburg Salon have little in common besides an intense dedication to their art. "Salon 2000," an exhibition currently being featured at the Williamsburg Art and Historical Society (WAH), is a diverse representation of the group's current output, including paintings, sculptures, photographs, and conceptual pieces.

The creativity and variety of the works in the show are remarkable. Some, such as the paintings of Rita Finnegan, are strictly realistic. Depicting Brooklyn scenes with almost-photographic accuracy, Finnegan draws the viewer's eye into her own vision of urban surroundings. Some of these, because they include patches of grass and trees, have an unexpectedly peaceful, pastoral quality.

Other pieces are not so quickly understood. Iain Machell's "Net of Silence" is an "installation piece," meaning that he created the work with the WAH space specifically in mind. He wrapped unraveled videotape around the gallery's four support columns, leaving the plastic tape cases—upon which

various titles such as "The Plan," "The Dreams," "The Anger" and "The Denial" are printed—dangling down. Between the columns, high in the air, the remainder of the unwound tapes are woven into a kind of fishnet that extends almost the length of the space. It is an impressive and perplexing piece.

As you stand contemplating Machell's creation, your brain may become open and conducive to receiving the non-verbal messages of some of the other featured artists. Jennifer Formica uses detailed photographs of such subjects as fish, embryos, and insects to reveal "the hidden beauty of the colors, textures, and forms of organic matter." Her unique talent is to show the viewer something profound and awe-inspiring in material that might otherwise escape notice.

Some pieces are graphic and disturbing, particularly Mary Westring's "Full Frontal," which she created after a friend's daughter was brutally raped. This diptych consists of two canvasses, one hung on the wall above

continued on next page



Carol Quint's "Hostage"