

# Time Out

## New York

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Janieta Eyre, *Incarnations #25, Lottie*, who died June 8th, 1995.

### **"Private Investigations"** Cristinerose Gallery, through Oct 5 (see Soho).

As a rule, I'm not a fan of the computer as a tool for art; I've seen it mislead too many artists. "Private Investigations" is a good example of how this can happen, since two of three otherwise interesting artists presented here employ the latest in graphic technology—and almost sink themselves in the process.

Ken Gonzales-Day nearly tames the digital beast, mainly because his project to recapture a lost gay heritage is so engaging. The artist is part Native American, though he wasn't raised in that culture. As a gay man, however, he has

been fascinated by the "Berdache" tradition of Native Americans, in which the homosexual was not only respected but cherished as a teacher, care-giver and magician. That Europeans destroyed this tradition is a tragedy, and Gonzales-Day's efforts to remember it—by using Photoshop to picture himself as a transgendered shaman—is moving. Unfortunately, I found myself distracted by the way the artist unconvincingly morphed his images together.

English artist Suky Best uses the melodramatic "Fotonovela" form of Spanish and Italian comic books to concoct ambiguous romantic narratives. Lines like "Dearest Darling, I had to write to say I won't be home anymore" are juxtaposed with isolated gestures or bits of cropped imagery. While I'm certainly drawn to Best's subject matter, her cheap-looking laser prints ruined any possibility of a deeper engagement.

Of the three, Toronto-based Janieta Eyre fares best, precisely because she eschews high-tech gimmickry, relying instead on seamless, in-camera montage to make her surreal double self-portraits. The artist is the surviving sibling of a Siamese-twin birth, and the macabre doubling of her own image—coupled with a complex, personal symbol system of vaginas, organ meats, fish and trails of blood—make for riveting, memorable work. After Gonzales-Day and Best, Eyre's gorgeously toned black-and-white photos and C-prints are a sensual joy to behold.—*Bill Arning*