

Three artists show explorations with light

REVIEW | PHOTOGRAPHY

LIGHTWORK: Contemporary color photography — Nancy Iddings, Lorie Novak, and Karen Smiley; at the Thomas Segal Gallery; through Nov. 14.

By Kelly Wise
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Of these three color photographers, Nancy Iddings creates the most striking imagery. Her photographs are kooky fabrications uniting video images from the tv screen and neon-like drawings of furnishings in kitchens and living rooms. Iddings concocts these images by photographing first in a room lighted solely by a tv screen. Then she shuts off the tv, opens the camera lens wide, and with

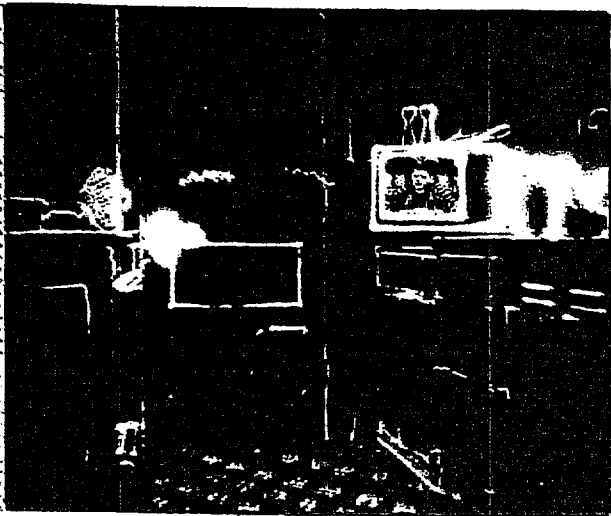
flashlights and color filters outlines and scrawls about objects in the room, which then appear in fiery sketches on her negative. In one image, Lucille Ball appears on the screen, close-up, enrapt in conversation. About her, objects in the kitchen acquire an eccentric incandescence: The curtains are orange, a fan crimson, a stove pot a chalky white. Iddings' photographs have a way of pulsating before our eyes.

Laurie Novak continues her creation of altered spaces through the use of slide images projected into photographed interiors. Her work is serious in nature, alternately urgent, fantastic, and symbolic. As in her earlier exhibition at the Thomas Segal Gallery, she remains absorbed by the chair as a symbolic object. As if recently

vacated, five chairs sit in a crude semicircle in one image, amidst the profile of a woman projected onto one wall and that of a table lamp enlarged the size of a kangaroo projected onto the other. A more macabre image depicts a woman rocked back on her heels, clutching a blue towel about her body. Near her, as if a creation of Stephen King, swims a man, face down in the water, trailing stringy black hair. These images are fairly engrossing, but there is a faint tendency in her newer work to caricature her deepest intentions.

In "The Healing," a four-panel work by Karen Smiley, the first photograph is of a rectangle of aquamarine sea. In the second, a goblet appears, filled with sea wa-

ter in which there is the suggestion that the shimmering in its depths is of some indescribably small living thing. The third depicts an x-ray of a man's chest and stomach cavities, in which something is growing. In the final image, the midsection of the man has been turned totally black, save for the ray of a bluish fish that seems to be breathing there. Smiley's work is more satisfying visually than it is conceptually. The title suggests a ritual, one that seems as puzzling as it is provisional. Sea becomes potion becomes healing through the unification of a man and fish. You may think, "Well, maybe... maybe not"; and as an afterthought you may wonder what was the affliction.



"Lucy," a Cibachrome by Nancy Iddings at the Segal Gallery.