

Artbeat

MICHAEL PAGLIA | APRIL 10, 2003 | 4:00 AM



Susan Goldstein, "Good vs. Evil"

Artists often encounter difficulties when they address politics in their work. Remember those severed ceramic penises that were stolen from a show at the Boulder Public Library last year? Their ostensible theme was violence against women, but those dismembered members didn't actually say anything about that; they just illustrated the bad taste of the artist and bad judgment of the exhibition organizer.

But Susan Goldstein uses good judgment and good taste, as seen in her truly remarkable political art exhibit, *Good vs. Evil: Gross Oversimplification*, which looks at the war in Iraq; the show is now up front at the Edge Gallery (3658 Navajo Street, 303-861-7572). Goldstein dedicated the exhibition to those who died at the World Trade Center and to Daniel Pearl, the *Wall Street Journal* reporter who was murdered in Pakistan last year -- presumably by al-Qaeda terrorists. But unlike more than half of the American public (according to polls), she does not connect Iraq to al-Qaeda; she keeps them separate, as they should be.

The title piece, "Good vs. Evil" (above), is a monumental giclée print that depicts Saddam Hussein and an avenging U.S. angel set against a map of the constellations. The artist also examines other players: In one set of giclée prints, she turns figures such as Osama bin Laden, Condoleeza Rice and Tony Blair into the kings, queens and jacks in a deck of cards.

Goldstein's work succeeds not only because it's so intelligent, but also because she's so accomplished as an artist.

Less intense and with a simple visual message as opposed to an intellectual one is *The Milk House Series*, which features individual and collaborative work by Gayla Lemke and Tim Flynn installed in the center space. I think that when artists collaborate, the results are usually bad -- those competing egos, you know. But somehow Lemke and Flynn overcame the issues inherent in collaboration, because the towers that they made together are marvelous -- especially the three based on windmills.

Michael Paglia is an art historian and writer whose columns have appeared in *Westword* since 1995; his essays on the visual arts have also been published in national periodicals including *Art News*, *Architecture*, *Art Ltd.*, *Modernism*, *Art & Auction* and *Sculpture Magazine*. He taught art history at the University of Colorado Denver.