

EVO GALLERY TAKES A COOL RAMBLE
THROUGH OTHER PEOPLE'S MEDICINE CHESTS

SQUEAKY CLEAN

About Art



TOM COLLINS
For the Journal

Last week I ripped Canyon Road a new alley, all in good humor, of course, and so this week I had to do a "Canyon Road Revisited and Reconsidered." It's only right and fair.

So maybe I was being a bit hyperbolic when I called a stroll up the venerable old art drag "a good walk spoiled," quoting Mark Twain on golf. I will now relent and say that Kelly Contemporary has joined a good number of estimable art emporia on the old art trail — from Canfield Fine Art and Karan Ruhlen at the bottom, Ernesto Mayans solidly in the middle of the block, with Allene Lapidis Gallery looming ominously, portentously across the street. And at the top there is Klaudia Marr, Turner Carroll, Nuart (though I will never understand the appeal of Juan Kelly's kitsch animal paintings) and the Artisan art supply store. Also, recall that Canyon Road boasts three of the most beautiful "zones of authenticity" in Santa Fe — El Zagan residence and gardens, home of the Santa Fe Historical Society; the back yards and outbuildings behind Nuart and Klaudia Marr; and El Farol saloon a little farther up.

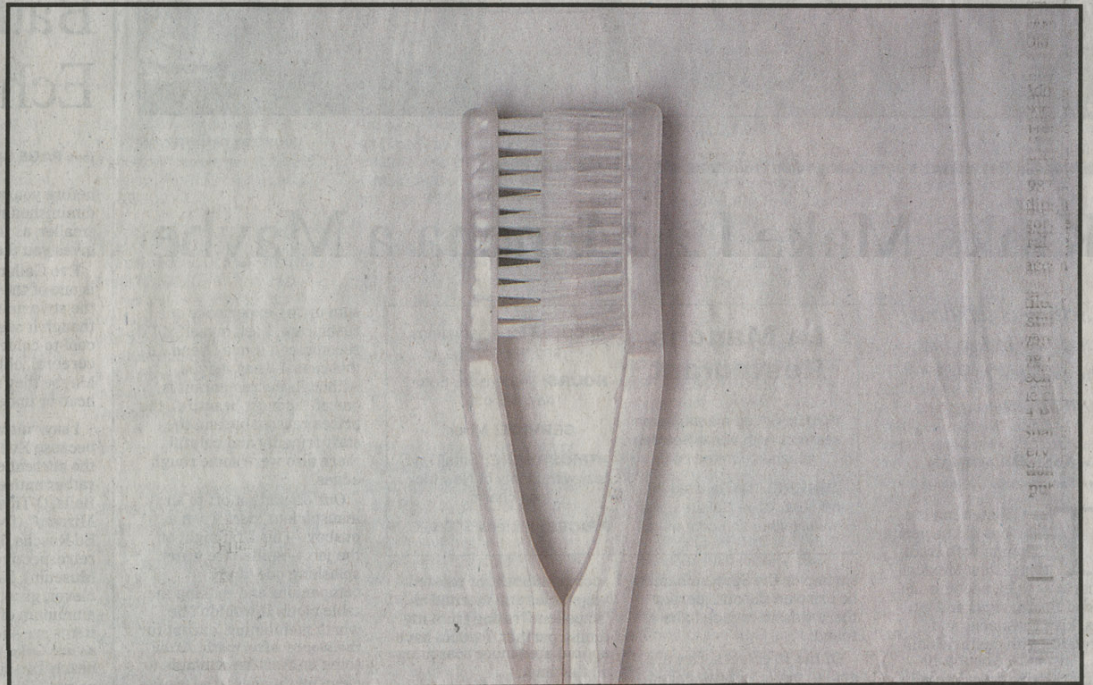
How often can you find two three-lettered art galleries within a stone's throw of each other? That's about all that Rich Morrow's ad-hoc Ion Gallerie at 715 Canyon Road, and the ultra-squeaky clean Evo Gallery at 725, have in common. And the work now on display in each establishment projects perfectly their respective identities.

I say "ad-hoc Ion Gallerie" as it is one of those near-extinct places, certainly on Canyon Road, a living space and a gallery. Fiona Pippa's wall-mounted sculpture, protruding piles of sometimes outré objets trouvés violently splashed with pinks and blues, which reminded me of the Dada-Expressionist sculptural explosions of the late Bill Gersh, lent a certain frenetic air to an already relatively claustrophobic atmosphere. And the work will likely already be down by the time you read this. That's ad-hoc.

It's hard to say how far one can take this



Coke Wisdom O'Neal produces nearly life-sized, cut-out color prints of medicine cabinet interiors.



Sandra Valenzuela's ghostly color prints on aluminum are slick and "ultra clean."

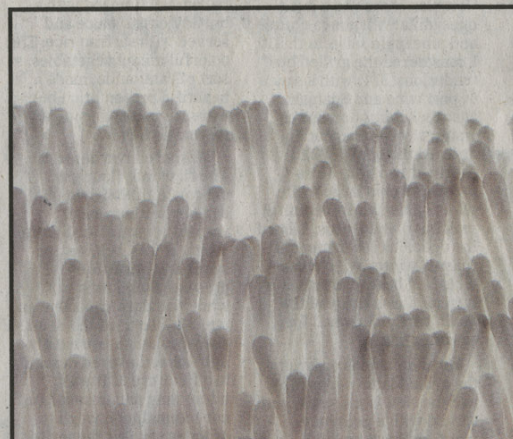
If you go

WHAT: "Cotton Balls, Q-Tips & Bathroom Mirrors," photographs by Coke Wisdom O'Neal and Sandra Valenzuela

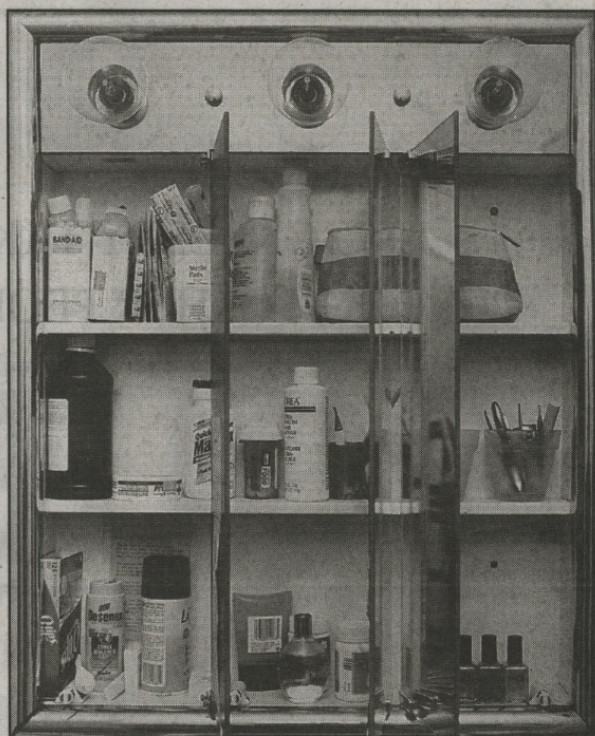
WHEN: Through March 3

WHERE: Evo Gallery, 725 Canyon Road, 982-4610

sort of assemblage, basically collage in three dimensions. BIGGER, certainly. Remember the old "Warholian Wager" — if it can't be better, it can always be bigger. But you can only go so big with this sort of strategy



Valenzuela photographs minimalist tableaux in bleached tones, like the forest of Q-tips in "Clean Freak, (Q-tips)."



O'Neal's medicine cabinet photos allow an opportunity to try to piece together the identity of the owner.

Bathroom Art Has Echo of Mortality

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before you reach the point of diminished return; and smaller, as these are, often gives you the bigger effect.

Evo Gallery, in high contrast, is one of the hottest spaces on the strip in its simple design, though it seems to have the cool-to-coldest exhibitions — cerebral, oblique, evanescent. Maybe they're just over my head or under my visual radar.

I say "ultra-squeaky clean" because Evo is, and because the current exhibition has the rather antiseptic title "Cotton Balls, Q-Tips & Bathroom Mirrors" (from the title of an Ed Ruscha drawing retrospective at the Whitney Museum). Sandra Valenzuela's clever, ghostly color prints on aluminum of personal hygiene items are slick and ultra-clean, as are Coke Wisdom O'Neal's nearly life-sized, cut-out color prints of the interiors of various medicine cabinets.

Chilly as it sounds — thematically and visually — there is a lot of sweet, warm wit and humor here. Valenzuela's setups are minimal tableaux in bleached tones. Twin rolls of toilet paper do a pale pas de deux, linking up to make an "infinity" or yin-

yang symbol. Two toothbrushes enmesh in an "Ultra Clean (kiss)," not to mention an array of Q-tips, a galaxy of Bayer aspirin and a trio of condom "halos."

You couldn't get more stuff into some of the medicine cabinets in O'Neal's intimate and juicy color shots, and some cabinets are eerily empty. And how singularly uniform medicine cabinets are in style. O'Neal's witty titles, based on a key, quirky item in each cabinet, make the shots even more grimly hilarious.

The shots are morbidly mesmerizing as you begin to try to piece together an identity based on malady. Makes you shudder, really. We are all, every last one of us, meeting our end here. No one's getting out alive; and our medicine cabinets, those intimate little altars of mortal fear, with their agents of anti-aging, anti-odor, anti-death, remind us of that fact. Does a full medicine cabinet indicate a greater anxiety about mortality, an empty cabinet less?

Personally, I went home after viewing these deadly stills and cleaned mine out. There wasn't much in there in the first place.