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ART REVIEW By ROBERTA SMITH FRIDAY, JULY 12, 1996

## Aldrich Museum

One of the stronger shows in the region is "No Doubt: African-American Art of the 90's," an exhibition of 10 young black artists organized at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art in Ridgefield by the artist Renée Cox. What is most striking and exciting about this show is its diversity and the resulting sense of liberation. These words apply not only to the different ways the artists here tackle issues of identity and self-representation, but also to the extraordinary range of styles and media in which they express themselves.

There are the richly embellished paintings of Kerry James Marshall, which present disquietingly fractured images of black life in the midst of white society. Radcliffe Bailey, a talented young painter from Atlanta, is represented by big bright patchwork paintings that include blown-up photographs of black children and adults. There are also Conceptual works: for example the photographic montages of Iké Udé, a Nigerian artist living in New York, who sardonically insinuates his changing visage into the covers of popular magazines and big posters for fictive movies.

Also in the Conceptual vein is a video installation by X-PRZ, a collaborative of four young artists using still and moving images, texts and recorded speeches, including those of Malcolm X, to attack white hypocrisy. It owes a bit too much to Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer but nonetheless shows promise.

Between these poles there is much to look at and think about, including one of Kara Walker's bitter visions of black and white relations in the antebellum South, satirically expressed in the black-on-white silhouettes en-

demic to the period. Gerald Cyrus's tender documentary photographs of black middle-class family life are presented in grids so that they play off one another effectively; Ms. Cox's big color photographs recast such Christian staples as the Last Supper and the Madonna and Child with black actors, starring the artist herself as both Jesus and Mary.

Ancillary to the show is "Blues Room," a small room painted red and covered with verse, soliloquies and sharp exchanges on the subject of love by the poet Trish Benson. From a purely aural point of view, it is very impressive.