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ART IN REVIEW

Ivan Witenstein Dan Fischer

*Derek Eller Gallery
526-530 West 25th Street, Chelsea
Through Oct. 5*

Each of the seven fiberglass and cast resin sculptures in Ivan Witenstein's impressive New York solo debut, titled "Here Comes the Son, Here Comes the Knight," is like a psychedelic version of American-style Social Realism with references to war, racism, popular culture, 19th-century literature and 20th-century history molded together with a visionary zeal.

A young boy with an adult's head stands in an inflatable lifeboat with a woman whose torso seems eaten by flames: he thrusts a hand up her skirt as she offers him a baby's bottle. Across the room an African-American man leans back asleep on an inner tube; another man-child sits commandingly in his lap, steering their makeshift raft using cut-off legs as oars. One image suggests a bad-dream version of "Leave It to Beaver," the other a sardonic cartoon of "Huckleberry Finn." Here and in his other work, Mr. Witenstein, who is 29, keeps any allegorical meanings elusive with stimulating results. With artists like this the future of public sculpture is starting to look interesting.

In the gallery's other show, Dan Fischer revisits Photo-Realism in a series of detail-perfect graphite drawings based on magazine illustrations of art world stars past and present. Jackson Pollock famously poses with a painting; Jeff Koons grins ferociously beside a porcelain puppy; Paul McCarthy wears a grisly monster mask. It's worth noting that these art world icons look every bit as weird as the figures in Mr. Witenstein's sculptures and are no less virtuosically crafted.

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