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Alan Turner

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ART IN REVIEW

Alan Turner

Lennon, Weinberg
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An urge to remake the body, using its parts in odd and unsettling relationships, seems partly to account for the Surrealist-influenced paintings and drawings of Alan Turner. In his imagery, several noses cohabit on a single torso, an eye doubles as a nose, and a vaginal cleft seams the long flat chin of a grotesque monster face. (Remember Magritte's "Rape"?)

Hands, as shapers, molders and presenters, like those of artists, play a central role in Mr. Turner's work. The recent "Untitled" (1999), toned in a grisly purplish blue, has a skull-like face composed of bulges and hollows and layers of shadow, bounded on both sides by big earlike appendages, one of which resembles a foot. Where the creature's lap might be, many hands supported by skeletal arms, some looking like body casts, are crossed. The work suggests a stern god bent on reshaping the world.

Hands are the focus of an earlier work, "Puppet" (1993), a sprightly drawing of a comic ceramic container in the shape of a bag, with eyes, a nose and a mouth through which a hand pokes; it is displayed by two realistic hands that hold it up against the outline of a torso. In a 1992 drawing, "Cook No. 1," the central image is a bucket suspended from a rope. Behind it is a vague biomorphic shape from which hands thrust out; an eye and an eyebrow are positioned on its lower part and stylized fruits from an adjacent bit of wallpaper infiltrate it. Free associative elements: a bucket over a fireplace in Chiapas, Mexico; a Buster Keaton movie, "The Navigator," and a piece of oilcloth bought in Oaxaca are some of the visual fragments that Mr. Turner says stimulated the drawing's development. In fact it is these earlier, more legible and funnier works that show off Mr. Turner's own hand to best advantage.

GRACE GLUECK