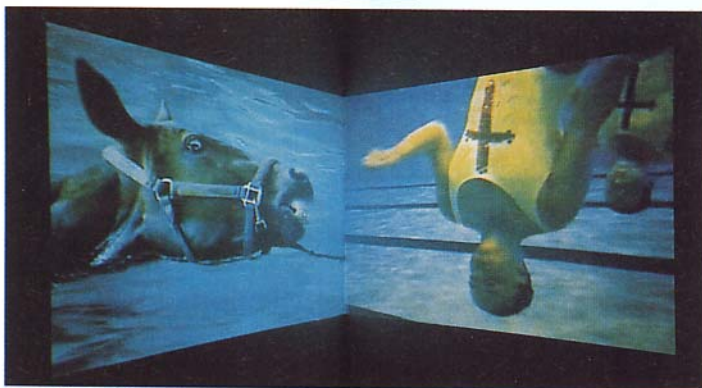


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Reviews



Janet Biggs, *Water Training*, installation view, 1997.

Janet Biggs
Anna Kustera Gallery,
through Dec 20 (see Soho).

The pickings here are on the slim side, but at least one of Janet Biggs's two new video installations strikes home with a swift blow to the no-pain/no-gain school of discipline. *Water Training* gives us a terrific example of voyeurism at its worst in two sequences projected close together on adjacent walls. One offers an underwater view of teenage synchronized swimmers; their flailing limbs instantly demonstrate the intense and ungainly effort demanded by the sport. If such labors produce a graceful picture above the surface, they certainly look ridiculous beneath it.

The neighboring image is of a young horse that appears to be near drowning. A taut rope leading from his bridle dis-

appears into the pool, and though he struggles heroically, it's clear he's not going anywhere. His nostrils flare, his lips part in agony, there's panic in his eyes. At one point, he turns toward the camera as if to ask why no one will come to his rescue. We can't see it, but there's another restraining tether attached to his tail. Apparently, this is a standard way of exercising budding racehorses. The horrified viewer is almost as compelled to watch this scene as the terrified horse is to keep on swimming.

Glacial Approach, the other video here, presents little more than a pretty picture of a boat making steady headway across a lake. The more affecting *Water Training* examines the overlap between pleasure and fear. It might be a clichéd idea, but Biggs provides it with new meaning.—Linda Yablonsky