

CALENDAR

by Leah Ollman

Not your usual kid pictures

"The Age of Innocence" at DNJ groups the work of four lesser-known photographers who address the vexed condition of childhood. The show holds some nice surprises, particularly in the work of **Pamela Mayers-Schoenberg** and **Holly Andres**.

The L.A.-based Mayers-Schoenberg is represented by a 1992 series of black-and-white images of a group of teenage boys in St. Louis. More sober than Helen Levitt's but more lighthearted than William Klein's, the pictures echo both artists and adhere to the street photographer's ethos of authenticity and emotional truth.

One kid stands against a wall captioned by graffiti emphatically declaiming "NO." Two boys loiter around an automotive carcass near the bank of a river. Mayers-Schoenberg's photographs serve as honest character sketches of young people negotiating a balance between vulnerability and toughness.

Andres, from Portland, Ore., presents large color tableaux based on childhood memories as filtered through the influence of the staged photography of Gregory Crewdson, among others. She is a filmmaker too, and the pictures read as carefully orchestrated stills, set pieces hinting at deeper dramas.

The most affecting images feature girls rehearsing pre-

Friday, March 7, 2008

calendarlive.com

scribed notions of womanhood. One girl studies a color-coordinated array of paper-doll-like cutouts, another sets a table with a classic meal of molded jello and canned corn. The girls aspire toward grace but seem slightly melancholy, as if visibly burdened by the constraints of societal expectation.

Brian Sorg and **Sarah Bierman**, both from Chicago, round out the show. Sorg chronicles, albeit thinly, the life of a teenage skater, and Bierman records the fantasy-tinged play of young girls. One of Bierman's subjects rides a bike in the basement in her underwear; another tosses handfuls of freshly cut grass. The pictures are tender but lack any real friction, the condition that most infuses and defines the so-called age of innocence.

DNJ Gallery, 154 1/2 N. La Brea Ave., L.A., (323) 931-1311, through March 29. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.dnj-gallery.net.