

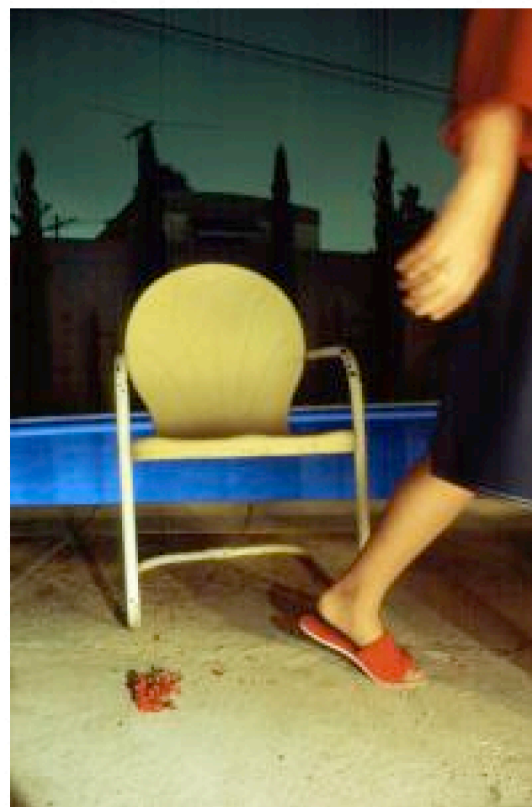
## EVIDENCE ROOMS

*Glenn Ligon at Regen II, "The Seventies Revisited" at dnj*

**BY PETER FRANK**

Wednesday, December 5, 2007 - 12:00 pm

Glenn Ligon deconstructs the African-American experience through appropriated language — words from elsewhere at once inappropriate for genteel company and appropriate to persistently nagging questions of race. Here Ligon has filled a vast room with a parade of relatively small gold-colored canvases on which is stenciled the same Richard Pryor joke — seemingly identical paintings, though several bear different Pryor *bons mots*. Far from merely turning Richard Prince into Fresh Prince, Ligon's same-game reflects on Black America's enduring "Invisible Man" status through Warholian repetition. In the other room, a neon sign reading "Negro Sunshine" — a line from Gertrude Stein's *Three Lives* — is painted black, glowing futilely beneath its obscuring coat. Not much to look at here, which is the point; for all the ghetto-jive fury and poignant metaphor, Ligon insists, African America's voice is still stifled, from within as without.



Jane O'Neal, *Leaving* (1977)

From the era that gave us Pryor's bite, a collection of unusual photographs bears witness to the nervy experimentation of Southern California camera artists. Photographer-surfer Anthony Friedkin caught some beautiful waves with his lens as well as his board, and Jane O'Neal embraced the banality around her by amping the lurid color of nighttime neon and early Cibachrome. But the real boundary-pushers among 1970s L.A. photogs were the ones who learned from Rauschenberg as well as Eggleston, who thought in terms of composing on paper as well as in camera: JoAnn Callis' black-and-white meditations on myth and reality, as visually silky as drawings; the quasi-rebuses of Darryl Curran, turning cascades of one-offs and outtakes into visual poems with their own rhyme schemes; and Eileen Cowin's ghost-pictures, superimposing fleeting apparitions on seemingly more stable images — "seemingly" because the fixed images only remind us that those people will be (and now are) lost to time. *Glenn Ligon at Regen Projects II, 9016 Santa Monica Blvd., W. Hlywd.; Tues.-Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. (310) 276-5424. "The Seventies Revisited" at dnj, 154½ N. La Brea Ave.,*

*L.A.; Tues.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m. (323) 931-1311. Both thru Dec. 8.*