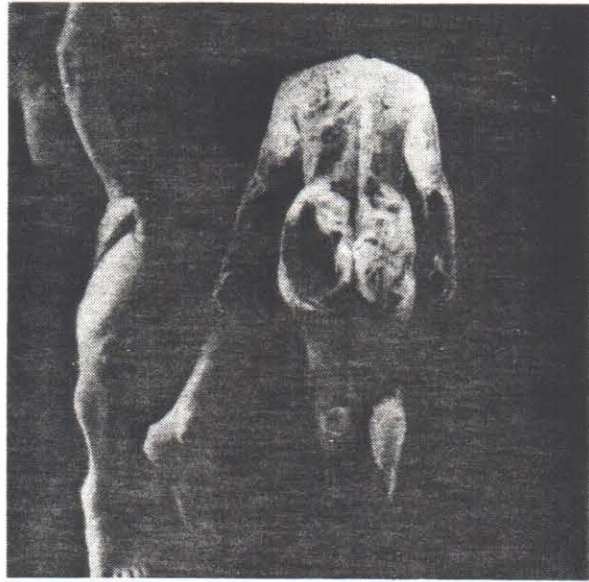


**ARTS BEAT**

EDITED BY DEBORAH KELLT



**Jean Semmel's Green Field at the Bypass Gallery**

York artist explores the aesthetics of maturing women in an agist society. With paintings of women in locker rooms — applying lipstick, pulling up bathing suits, and dry-

**ART**

**Locker Room Talk**

WALKING THROUGH the Bypass Gallery, Joan Semmel explains several paintings in her latest show, **An Other View**. She ends each thought with the rhetorical "Do you know?"

Happily, we do. There's no mistaking Semmel's powerful agenda in this 21-piece show, where the New

ing their hair with tiny yellow blowers — Semmel beautifully portrays Everywoman here, all the flaws and flesh intact.

"We don't have to all look like Barbie dolls," Semmel explains as she points to *Rear*, which focuses on one woman's backside. "There are never any images in our culture of women as we really are."

Semmel's paintings, inspired by her own gym, are her best argument. The breasts don't bubble over like Claudia Schiffer's, and the thighs don't strut like Cindy Crawford's, but the beauty of each of these not-of-ten women radiates more than any Guess ad could.

"Just look at these women," Semmel says. "They're all so sensual. Just because you reach a certain age doesn't mean you're no longer a sexual being."

Semmel's intellect keeps the show from being a pure study of the female form. Because her celebration takes place in a gym, where flab is a four-letter word, the viewer is left to wonder whether these women are strengthening their bodies, or molding them into societal stereotypes. Semmel also uses lipstick as a motif in several of the paintings, an image she sees as being both sexually empowering (as a tool for seduction) as well as destructive (as a mask of the self).

As an aging artist, Semmel has included herself in this visual discussion. Her own body appears in many of the images, and Semmel has actually painted over several of her earlier works — which celebrated the joy of sex from a young female's point of view — with haunting ghosts of aging women.

"I call them Over Lays," Semmel says about the work. "It describes the process, and plus, I like the pun."

An Other View runs through March 28 at the Bypass Gallery, 578 Broadway, Room 106. Gallery hours are Monday through Saturday, 10:00 am through 5:00 p.m. For more information, call 925-1679.

—Deborah Kellt