



GALLERIES—UPTOWN

CARROLL DUNHAM

From 1982 to 1987, when painting was stuck between the bombast of neo-expressionist figuration and the endgame of monochrome abstraction, Dunham, then in his early thirties, struck out on his own, using paint and pencil on plywood to make works of perverse beauty. His signature penis-nosed characters have their roots in the primordial soup of these riotous compositions, in which phalluses, fields of stripes, and cartoonish shapes—splats, blobs, gushes—commingle. The playing field of painting is levelled, as Guston and graffiti tags collide with Giotto. (Note the clusters of Froot Loop-colored circlets, hovering like the halos of cherubim.) More than twenty years later, each work here looks as exhilarating—and as risky—as ever. Through April 5. (Skarstedt, 20 E. 79th St. 212-737-2060.)