

Scenes from Geary Street galleries

Fred Wilson and Brett Reichman, who are enjoying one-person shows at the **Rena Bransten Gallery**, 77 Geary St., through April 26,

BY DAVID BONETTI
EXAMINER ART CRITIC

Reichman is one of San Francisco's most skillful painters, and in his new work, titled "Died of Laughter," he continues his exploration of hidden sexuality in the most innocent childhood toys. Indeed, his work suggests ultimately that there is no such thing as innocence, that as a culture we have poisoned that well for good. But we can laugh all the way to the funeral, if we want.

"Innocence and Sacrifice" is a virtuoso painting on paper. A rubber toy sheep with hard molded fleece fills the sheet. Its head has been pulled off, leaving a suggestive view into the body cavity. The lavender-toned "Cap in Hand" is even more ribald in its suggestiveness. A joyful elf with legs and arms spread shakes his condom-like cap at the viewer while a face peers out of his bottom hole.

Reichman is a master of lush decorativeness, and the best painting in the show might very well be the only one lacking randy elves and headless sheep. "Sleepy Hollow" is a fantasia on rococo themes with rosettes and bunches of grapes dangling from the convoluted French curves. Beautiful



"Ringing the Bell Backwards," by Brett Reichman, oil on canvas, 1997, Rena Bransten Gallery