

Banks Violette, "Arroyo Grande: 7.22.95"

**Team Gallery, through Aug 16
(See Chelsea).**

In 1995, 15-year-old Elyse Marie Pahler was murdered in Arroyo Grande, California. After being dragged into a eucalyptus grove, she was strangled, then stabbed by three of her classmates. Her killers apparently had an obsession with the music of the band Slayer—an obsession that the court and the media would later determine inspired the crime.

In a pair of installations, artist Banks Violette investigates the role that teen fantasy played in this gruesome episode. In the main gallery, he has re-created the scene of the crime as if it were a stage set for a heavy-metal concert, with the eucalyptus grove described as a sleek black-epoxy pool. Around it are huddled drum stands hung with black-epoxy icicles and an ominous-looking black tree root. Yards of fine silver chain, ending in the two halves of a broken-heart pendant, loop around these forms, binding them together. A stereo with shards of plastic jutting out of its speakers sits close by, near a stylized painting of shadowy, fanged skulls pierced by swords. In Violette's metaphoric representation, the scene is less frightening than it is solemn, even tranquil.

54 TIME OUT NEW YORK

JUL 25–AUG 1, 2002



Banks Violette, *ghost*, 2002.

Violette's homage to Elyse in the back gallery is disturbing: A sculpture of a unicorn faces a painting of blue eyes floating in space. One eye drips fat, flesh-colored tears, executed in the style of doodling. The painting is sentimental and eerily vacant; meanwhile, the unicorn, is sleek and pretty, but its head is melted into hard, formless globs—the symbol of young girls' day dreams is transformed into a representation of innocence perverted and made macabre.

If music can inspire violence, Violette seems to say, then art can possibly transcend it, cooling the killers' heavy-metal fury by summoning up fear, sadness and frustration. Using saccharine, girlish clichés, Violette portrays the horror in prettiness and the mysterious beauty of evil.—*Ana Finel Honigman*

★Team Gallery

527 W 26th St between Tenth and Eleventh Aves (212-279-9219). Mon–Fri 10am–6pm.

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Quoting both kitsch and high-art vocabularies, two installations reveal a deep, dark corner of American culture (see Reviews). Through Aug 16.