

## "H<sub>2</sub>O"

Danese, through Aug 26 (see 57th St).

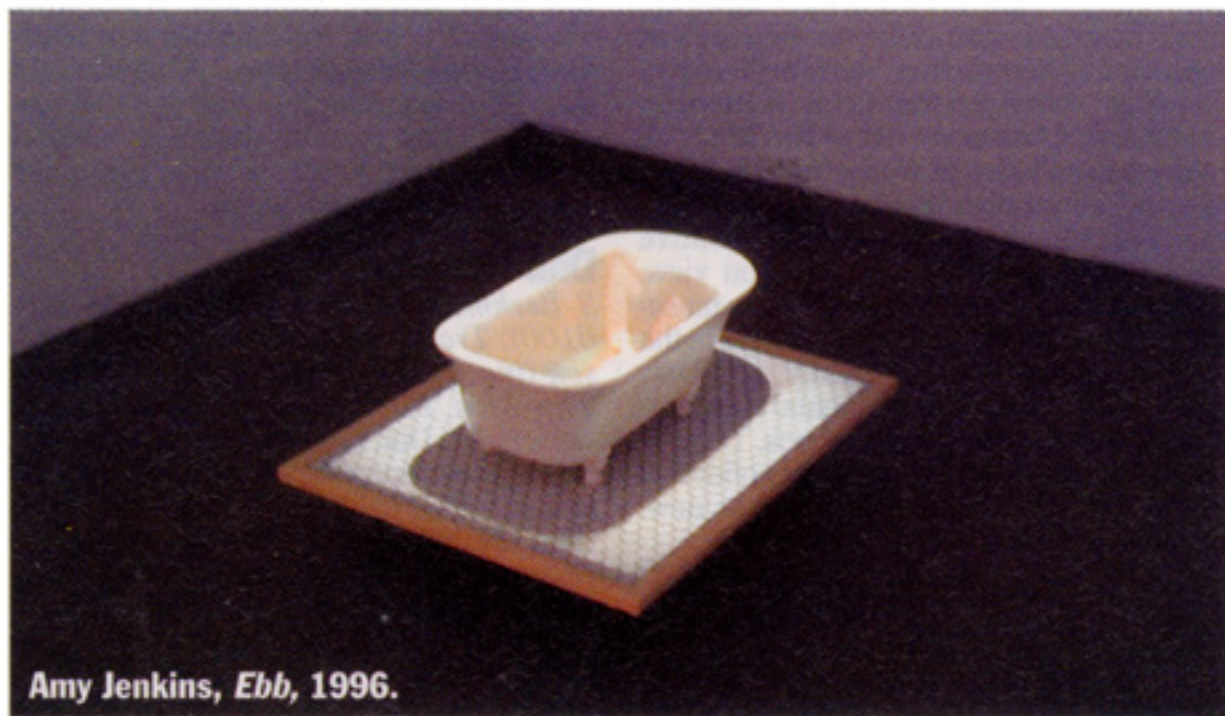
Seascapes and swimming pools are kept to a minimum in "H<sub>2</sub>O," a group exhibition curated by Jo Anna Isaak that takes a refreshingly complex tack in approaching this age-old theme. Here, a new crew of Turners and Homers take the plunge, discovering some of the more murky undercurrents of this seemingly transparent subject.

Watercolors might seem the natural choice for water-oriented artworks, but video proves an equally effective medium for conveying fluidity. In *Ebb*, Amy Jenkins projects an image of an uncannily lifelike bathing woman into a scaled-down porcelain tub; we watch as her menstrual fluid flows out of the pink-tinted bathwater back to its source, her body. Janet Biggs's poetic video, *Apraxia*, combines a water ballet with the fountain of youth, as two elderly women regain flexibility and grace in the buoyancy of a swimming pool. The body—which is 90 percent water—is still more viscerally evoked in Jeanne Silverthorne's *Sweat Pore*, a magnified view of a single pore, cast in rubber and

encased in a dark Baroque frame. Sally Mann updates the "bathers" tradition in *Three Graces*, which shows the artist and her two daughters, naked and exuberantly peeing on a seashore jetty.

Water pollution is a subtheme in this compact exhibition of 24 artists. In his *Environmental Aesthetic Series*, Mark Jones tones black-and-white photos of industrial views to suggest the presence of invisible poisonous fluids

contaminating our water supply. Christy Rupp fills an oversize wire armature, shaped like a nautilus, with clear plastic water bottles, using typical beachfront garbage to address the issue of ocean pollution. Kiki Smith approaches the topic more obliquely, summing up a wealth of sorrow in a succinct gesture with *Brown Water*—ten large, tea-colored glass tears displayed on a pedestal.—*Barbara Pollack*



Amy Jenkins, *Ebb*, 1996.