

# FORWARD

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JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY

**FACING ART HISTORY:** Ken Aptekar's 'Joan says, "Look at Isidore Kaufmann,"' 1996, takes images from paintings by a 19th-century Jew.

## *Paintings That Get Personal*

**J**oan says, 'Look at Isidore Kaufmann,' reads the text on a painting with that title by Ken Aptekar in his show at the Jack Shainman Gallery in SoHo. The "Joan" is Joan Rosenbaum, director of New York's Jewish Museum, who told Mr. Aptekar about the little-known 19th-century Viennese artist when he was looking for an image of a traditional Jewish boy.

Mr. Aptekar promptly appropriated images from Kaufmann's work — along with images by more familiar Old Masters such as François Boucher and Georges de la Tour — in his pictures. He then added his own autobiographical reflections in sandblasted glass bolted over his painted panels. "What I hear is, 'Jews aren't redheads,'" reads the text on one picture. "You must be somebody else's Gentile kid." It follows with his father asking the barber to "Give him a Princeton, Charlie." Another painting recounts his mother's worry about her son being an artist.

By combining autobiography with what he calls art-historical "deconstructions," Mr. Aptekar injects his musings on Judaism into the debate on ethnic identity currently raging in SoHo.

**ART**

Jack Shainman Gallery, 560 Broadway, N.Y., through Nov. 9, Tues.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m. (212-966-3866)