

# Small Is Beautiful

Contemporary art, from Abstract Expressionism to hyper-realism, has been characterized by a certain penchant for the gigantic. Canvases suitable only for the wall of an auditorium. Sculptures for outdoor display because no indoor space smaller than a hangar could accommodate them. Installations for sale only to collectors whose homes come equipped with warehouse-strength floors.

It has all grown more than a little intimidating. Original art, the art world has seemed to tell us, is for people with fat wallets living in huge spaces.

Thus the charm of "Get Back," an exhibit at the Kohn Turner Gallery on Melrose Avenue. No work among the more than 200 on display is larger than three inches in any dimension. The artists, all alumni of the Claremont Graduate School of Art, produced these miniatures for a grand reunion of all past grads last October. When the show closed in Claremont, Jan Turner-Colburn brought it to her Melrose gallery.

Apart from size, no restriction was placed on the Claremont grads. These miniatures are as varied in style as in emotional and intellectual content. Their power to surprise and move is a bit like the dramatic power of puppets, who are smaller than life but somehow grow by shrinking.

More than that, however, the show (which closes Saturday) ambushes our glum certitude that in the coming year, we shall all be making do with less, catches us by surprise and cheers us up. "Sure," it says, "but with a little you can do a lot: You'd be surprised."

May 1995 bring us all a little surprise. Artists or not, we could use one.

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