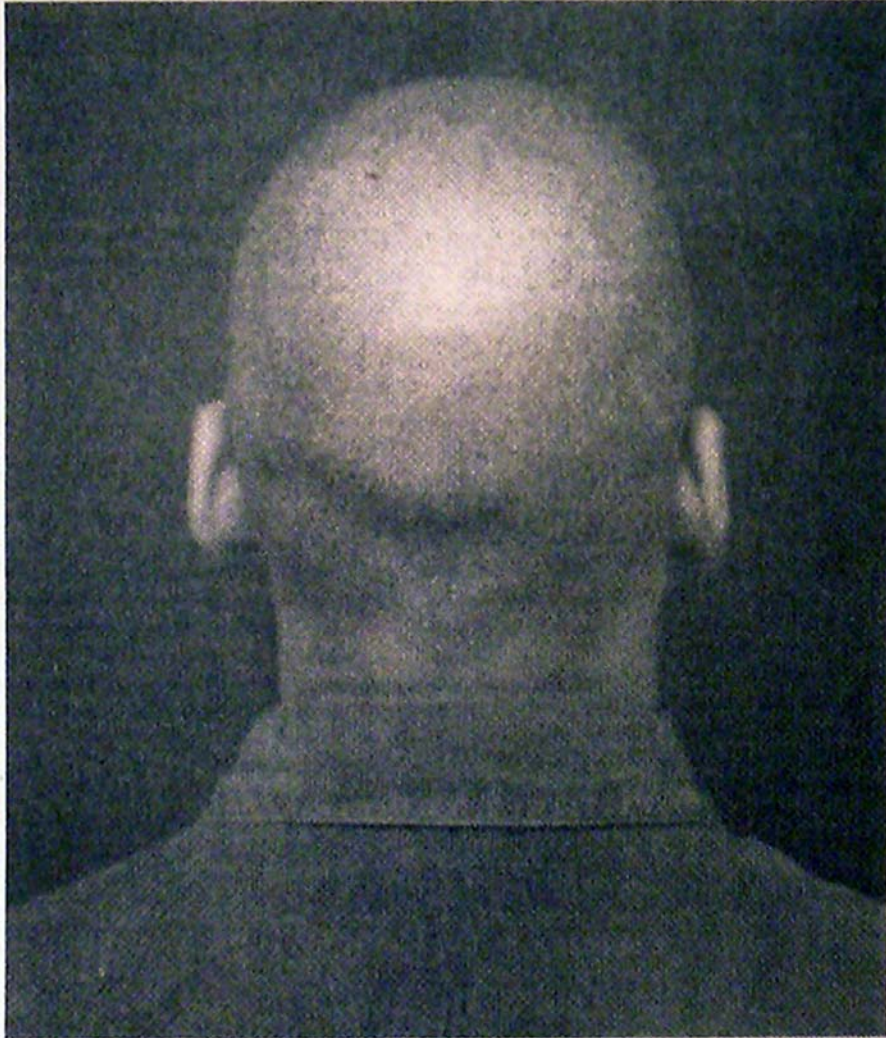


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Bill Hodges Gallery

'GLENN LIGON: UNAUTHORIZED' Famous for conceptual work that relishes and parodies racial stereotypes and cultural insensitivity, the gay African-American artist Glenn Ligon, 47, has not had a solo show in New York for four years. He returns, to the Bill Hodges Gallery, with a blistering assembly of works in various mediums from the last couple of decades, among them a pair of closely observed black-and-white screen prints on canvas of the back of his shaved head, above. They resemble studies in phrenology, a pseudoscience sometimes used to justify racism. There is also a nice selection of black-and-white text paintings, including "Untitled (Crowd/The Fire Next Time)" (2000), a photographic image of an African-American crowd at a demonstration on the Mall in Washington in 1995 overlaid with a silkscreen in glistening coal dust of an excerpt from "The Fire Next Time" by James Baldwin. The text reads: "Something in me wondered, 'What will happen to all the beauty?,' " in this context suggesting a gentle satire of protest rallies and the civil rights cause. Mr. Ligon's appetite for traversing racial stereotypes finds vivid expression in his narratives, etchings on handmade paper purporting to be the title page of testimonials on his intrepid life and adventures among white people in the art world. They make you laugh, but like all good socially or politically engaged art, the pieces also have the underappreciated virtue of momentarily letting the viewer see the world through someone else's eyes. (Through Aug. 25, Bill Hodges Gallery, 24 West 57th Street, Manhattan, 212-333-2640, billhodgesgallery.com.)

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