

**CLINTON (PRAYING HANDS)**

WEDS.-SUN., AUG. 25-29

Sep 8

**WITH THE UPCOMING** convention and election, art exhibits that address political issues are unavoidable. Most are predictably dull, but Boreas, a gallery in Brooklyn, is preparing to present a thoughtful show titled *Clinton (Praying Hands)* by Viviane Silvera. The opening is from 6 to 9 p.m. this Wednesday.

Silvera, an artist in her early thirties, has created six large-scale pencil drawings copied from newspaper photos of Bill Clinton. Cropping the images to focus in on the hands and eyes, Silvera has taken her artistic cue from Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer's technique and his drawings of praying hands.

Boreas director Scott Laugenour doesn't normally show figurative work, but Silvera's skill and her clever choice of subject persuaded him to hang the show. Summer exhibitions often feature new artists and untested ideas.

Silvera draws Clinton in pink or violet, and her monochromatic color choices are just the start of her layered investigation. In most of the images, Clinton's hands are in a praying position or clinched together in fists that cover his mouth and highlight his tired eyes. Most of the drawings stand at around six feet tall, giving them the larger-than-life aura of religious idolatry. Yet the psychologically rich body language and ironic focus leave the works open to interpretation.

On first inspection, Clinton, because of the close-up cropping, is not instantly recognizable, and the image of a man deep in thought, with his hands strained in prayer, offers an entirely different stream of investigation.

Silvera's drawings have the look of a blow-up etching. Allowing the comparison to a master on the scale of Dürer is risky, but Silvera's work does manage to capture the former president's anxiety. During this time of political overexposure, Silvera's gigantic pictures allow us to compare the similarities between religious and political veneration, as they cleverly insinuate capitulation to the vanity of power.

Boreas, 133-A Roebling St. (betw. N. 4th & N. 5th Sts.), Williamsburg, 718-384-3562, 1-6, free.

JULIA MORTON