

# examiner

## REVIEWS

Reviews by Joshua Kind

PAUL LAMANTIA [Douglas Kenyon Gallery, 230 E. Ohio]:

At first we may be forced to act and feel like voyeurs before this work. Human-like forms are in front of us, packed into dense spaces; some of their clothes are off; and some kinds of *menages* (either a *deux* or a *trois*) are going on. But in the end LaMantia's paintings emerge as art of a high order where that oldest of fusions holds our attention—form and content (it's almost embarrassing to say it like that).

The violence done to and created for these forms seems so intrinsic to LaMantia's vision that very little obvious smut is going on; rather the work seems like a bringing up-to-date of something like Bronzino's *Allegory* via Francis Bacon—a savage moral indignation against human shortcomings, perhaps our psychic self-derogation fires the artist. The harsh color and drawing give the work a primitive look (a look that may also come from the intensity of the artist's commitment to the image) and yet LaMantia does not go over into naive coyness and self-indulgence: the surface look in paint finish, contour line, and form invention remains firm throughout.

I particularly like *The Solution of the Lost Object* where the forms begin to lose their singularity and lose themselves in one another so that a further tension is added. Yet LaMantia's confidence shows nowhere better than in this ability to isolate the figures as in *Reminiscence of My Adolescence*.



*Reminiscence of My Adolescence*