

Plus: Is Larry Gagosian Slipping? *By Eric
Konigsberg p.26*

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High School Is a Sadistic Institution.

A new wave of research suggests

it may be the worst possible place
for the vulnerable 16-year-old mind.

By Jennifer Senior

Finally, a Chance to Draw on the Walls Robin Rhode turns a gallery into a coloring book.

BY CARL SWANSON

WHEN ROBIN RHODE was in school in Johannesburg during the twilight of apartheid, upperclassmen would herd younger students into the boys' room, draw a picture on the wall—a bicycle, say—and force them to interact with it. This hazing ritual, fueled by angry longing—South Africa was excluded from the global economy, and few students had things like bikes—is reenacted in his work, which often consists of the artist performing alongside something he's sketched. Works along those lines are what you'll see now at the Chelsea location of Lehmann Maupin, and recently, he turned the Chrystie Street branch of the gallery into a big coloring book, stenciling pictures on the walls and inviting 37 first-graders from the South Bronx to fill in the blanks. Kids paired off to operate Rhode's oversize crayons, one supporting the rear and the other in charge of aiming. The students are participants in a program called Time In, which connects children in the city to its aloof creative life of galleries, opera, and museums. "They were delighted to be able to draw on the walls after not being able to touch anything," says Cyndie Bellen-Berthézène, Time In's director. The nonprofit "is not really about high culture," she says, "but being involved in the world and feeling they're a part of it. To destroy the idea of us-and-them." She pauses: "The racial divide." And to be sure, there was not a towhead among the kids. Rhode, who was classified as "colored" under apartheid, has his own agenda. "The market is getting more hectic and demanding. It's creating this huge social

ROBIN RHODE:
PARIES PICTUS
LEHMANN
MAUPIN, THROUGH
MARCH 16.

divide between communities and the art bubble," he says. The kids were pretty hectic and demanding, too: "Pick me! *Pick me! Pick me!*"

