

The Philadelphia Inquirer

# Arts & Entertainment

## Art

Film and video works are a strong presence at Whitney Biennial. Page 8.



## Film

Against Olaf and the yaks, Pedro Almodovar stands a good chance. Page 7.



## 7 Days

Broadway's "Stomp" stomps into the Merriam Theater for eight shows. Page 6.

## Music

Philly's Stargazer Lily talks about the South by Southwest experience. Page 12.



Art By Edward J. Sozanski

# Film and video shine brightest at this year's Whitney Biennial

**N**EW YORK — In the past, the Whitney Biennial has produced a sensation or two, but not this year. This year's edition is agreeable and mildly stimulating rather than provocative or outrageous.

The six curators who assembled the exhibition by consensus might have been trying to raise a few hackles by commissioning Hans Haacke, who is known for his polemical art, to create an installation.

However, Haacke's indictment of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's overreaction last year to the "Sensation" exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art — a piece that strains to evoke the fascist repression of Nazi Germany — packs no more punch than a window display at Bloomingdale's.

In fact, Haacke's piece feels conspicuously out of place in this "mil-

lennial Biennial," which is generally more concerned with various forms of introspection — art about the nature of art, perception and reality.

This year, the Whitney decided that its signature exhibition would be organized by a half-dozen guest curators, none from New York.

That was supposed to give the show less of a New York personali-

ty, but guess what: Half the artists chosen live here, and most of the others come from California, Chicago and Texas, with men and women represented about equally.

But even though the artists come from relatively few places, the show doesn't seem biased toward one place or another. It could come from one place or every place, which suggests that contemporary art is becoming increasingly homogenized, both domestically and internationally.

In this Biennial, which features 97 artists, film and video constitute a noticeably strong presence, to the point that one feels that they have taken over the soul of the exhibition.

Major video works are distributed through the three whole floors that the exhibition occupies. The curators also have created a "projection gallery" in which seven artists See **SOZANSKI** on 19



A digital still from "Ouija 2000," by Ken Goldberg, is among Net works.



"True Blonde at Home" is an oil on linen by Philadelphia native Lisa Yuskavage. The Biennial has taken care to include such representational painting, although most of it is quirky.