

NEW THIS WEEK

FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES

*Andrea Rosen Gallery,
130 Prince St.*

Through February 24.

In an age when ten-second sound bites pass for ideas, Felix Gonzalez-Torres' art is old-fashioned; it slows you down. You walk into the gallery space and are confronted with stacks of large sheets of paper. (If you're short, the tallest may just reach your waist.) These stack or pile works are deceptively simple and all too easy to dismiss. A pile of black paper abuts a pile of white; a stack of Xerox "prints" with the dictum "Somewhere better than this place." The ideas of paradox, duality, the brevity of human life, and the contingencies of human nature begin to resonate in your mind. Another work—a pile of black-bordered white papers—inspires a meditation on framing, context, what might be projected onto that virginal white space. Projection is a key to Gonzalez-Torres' method, whether you think of last year's billboard homage to the Stonewall rebellion, which offers viewers a few key events in gay history and a black field on which to imagine their individual histories, or a black-and-white photo of a tiny gull and a cloudy sky transformed into a jigsaw puzzle in the back of the gallery. At first only the Pac-Man-shaped puzzle parts are visible, then the image of the bird emerges, and you realize that it matters less what you're seeing than what you're thinking or feeling. There's a wonderful sense of tact about these virtual Proustian madeleines that acknowledges the viewer's primacy in completing the work. When three adjacent stacks of papers with a sky blue stripe make me ponder architecture, the landscape, minimal sculpture, the tactile quality of the paper, and the tender feelings partly engendered by the fact that we're allowed to help ourselves to these "prints," then I recall that less is still—occasionally—more. *Robert Atkins*