LEHMANN MAUPIN

PAPER MAGAZINE May, 1997, p. 132

GILBERT & GEORGE

That Gilbert & George, one of the most enduring artist partnerships, resemble bankers more than controversial artists is one of the many double plays that makes them so fascinating. For over 30 years, this British duo has created sculpture using photographs and their own bodies. Aptly, a dual showing of their photo-based work—at the young upstart gallery Lehmann Maupin (39 Greene St.) and the veteran Sonnabend (420 W. Broadway), their New York dealer since the late 60's—is a tour de force of what they do best: shock and seduce the viewer. "Art has to be subversive," they have long claimed, and these new works do not disappoint. Much as a painter uses pigments or a sculptor uses clay, Gilbert & George have chosen bodily fluids as their medium for this new series, titled "The Fundamental Pictures." Microscopic samples of blood, spittle, urine, feces and seminal fluid (hence such willfully provocative titles as Blood on Shit, Piss on Us and Spunk Blood Piss Shit Spit) have been photographically enlarged and arranged in tastefully modernist grids. With their clear, saturated colors of red, white, yellow, brown and black, the 39 works on view through June 28 at both galleries (including *Blood* and Piss Piss Piss) resemble the best of post-Pop pranksterism as well as stained-glass windows from a profane and playful church of the life spirit.