

The New York Times
Art In Review, August 18, 2006

PARTIAL RECALL

“Partial Recall” offers an engaging, diversified selection of works by eight artists that range in mood from comic to tragic. Memory is the loose thematic thread tying them all together.

On the funny side are Jeffrey Vallance’s nutty, faux-antique personal reliquaries. His neatly made painted wood and glass boxes display objects supposedly from his own past, like the broken top of an Orange Crush bottle and the thigh bone of a chicken named Blinky. The stories behind these objects are told in amusing, Thurberesque texts.

In a more minimalist spirit, Emma Kay’s digital prints display typewritten summaries of three plays by Shakespeare inaccurately recalled from personal memory. And in a socially satiric vein, Mike Kelley’s “Memory Ware Flat,” a large panel bearing hundreds of pieces of cheap metal jewelry, ponders the sentimental value people invest in consumerist junk.

Veering toward the sad end of the spectrum, Kutlug Ataman’s “Cinderella and the Virgin” presents pairs of video interviews with people from an Istanbul ghetto: orphaned children on one television, and a depressed mother surrounded by children on the other. And Juergen Teller’s evocative color photographs show bleached glimpses of Nazi ruins in Nuremberg.

Bohemian romance is promoted by Dash Snow’s enlarged blurry Polaroids of his young friends behaving wildly, while Michael Vasquez’s Impressionistic paintings based on photographs of people and scenes from his own gangster past invoke the myth of the outlaw artist. And in nostalgic, sweetly illustrative paintings by Christian Curiel, children act out poetic allegories about moral conflict and death.

KEN JOHNSON