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AROUND THE GALLERIES

Living friskily is best revenge

By CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT
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The milieu at "Milieu" is chaotic and jumpy. In the lively group exhibition of five artists at the Lizabeth Oliveria Gallery, a funeral is a fandango, soccer is less sport than brawl and, when the personal is political, personal adornment becomes political action. Art is cast as a kind of pick-up match composed of serious ad hoc play.

Eric Wesley's disconcerting "Frit Display" is an elegant black mannequin-hand attached to the handle of a brutal knife blade that has been thrust into a pedestal top. Draped around the slender wrist is a slinky bracelet made from a chain of three skinny French fries cast in solid gold.

Since that precious ore has been a historic motivation for European colonial incursion and brutality, the juxtaposition of elements in Wesley's sculpture generates contradictory thoughts of glamour and gore, sex and violence, high fashions and low deeds. A handout notes that the word *frit* is French for fried — and paradoxically, given this slave-labor context, in French it's pronounced "free."

But it's also a slang term meaning ruined — as in "*Il est frit*" (He's done for). Chic is rarely shocking, but Wesley gets provocatively, productively close.

A horizontal painting of wide green acrylic stripes by Chris Beas is overlaid with the linear white markings of a soccer field. A wry international twist is given to the specifically American artistic tradition of abstract field-paintings.

In other works, soccer action figures are orchestrated into exuberant, tangled clusters. It's impossible to distinguish an altercation from a dance, a game nitch from a mosh pit or a lusty



'FRIT DISPLAY': As part of the "Milieu" group show, Eric Wesley attaches a graceful black mannequin hand to a knife. A chain made of French fries cast in gold is draped around the wrist.

BRIAN FORREST

Spellacy's artful messiness pales next to Aaron Garber-Malkovska's installation, in which a foul-smelling tent is draped with butter-yellow cloth, surrounded by busted office equipment, stacks of packaged bagel sandwiches, sacks of CDs and other assorted junk. Music hints at amusements hidden inside the makeshift hobo camp-

An African litter in the home-made painted-plywood shape of a Mercedes limousine is propped atop booming speakers, from which hip-hop rhythms blare. (The music was salvaged from a pirate radio station in Miami.) A small flat-screen TV inside the limo-hearse plays a continuous loop of snapshots gleaned from personal Internet websites. Most