

Plagens, Peter, "Reviews," *Artforum*, Volume 13, No. 4, (December 1974), pp. 83-85, illus.

John White's artistic personality is split in that his performances and sculpture are heady, probing, and, in the words of the philosopher, "create the taste by which they are to be enjoyed," while his drawings are quite good looking, even beautiful, in the conventional modernist sense. It's not that White wants to have it both ways – a performer with objects for sale, or an experimenter who still displays competence at art-school motor skills. It's only that he possesses a sensitivity about the psychological harmonies and conflicts that informs what might otherwise be rather dry records of his performance activities, playing golf, and therapy sessions. The ten standard-size drawings are rapid-fire, diagrammatic, X-based fugues and minuets using PenTel, stick'em coding dots, pencil, and watercolor. Like White's performances, they're clean, open, honest, and refreshing. They're also a mite too obviously landscape-referential, a little too puffy in parts with pink orange color striations, at times done on the wrong kind of paper (ersatz parchment), and maybe too easily enigmatic (is this really a plan for some weird mental goings-on?).

These objections amount, however, to carping in the face of disturbingly universal acceptance: his peers like the show, off-the-street traffic likes it, the newspaper poured syrup on it, and everybody thinks White's a sweetheart of a guy. Perhaps everybody knows that, too, and it's the curse because he has yet to take off as deserved. You notice, at last, that as much light, space, energy, whatever, comes off the wall to charge the atmosphere as with Asher's in absentia across the street... and it happens at one of the smaller, choppiest, optically difficult galleries in town.