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By MICHAEL BRENSON

"Figure!" (Hal Bromm Gallery, 90 West Broadway, at Chambers Street): This show is a useful companion piece to "Twentieth-Century American Drawings." There are several works by five younger artists — Rosemarie Castoro, Luis Frangella, Grace Graupe-Pillard, Jody Pinto and Rick Prol. No matter how expressive and brash these drawings may seem, and no matter how rooted some of them are in New York City streets, all the artists, except for Prol, seem to welcome the kinds of art-historical associations that are inevitably aroused by the human figure. And even Prol's grizzly figures, all of whom look as if they were born with one finger in an electric socket, evoke the history of art. His men and women are seen through shutters and broken glass in a way that suggests a commentary on the Renaissance belief in painting as reality (usually idealized) seen through a window.

Frangella is the most brash in his use of paint and the most dependent upon ancient sources. His "Monster of Avenue B" is a huge painted cardboard head that borrows its monumentality and pathos from the Roman head of Constantine, while at the same time underlining the differences between the Roman Empire and the East Village. Pinto, who is also in the National Academy of Design show, paints raw works on paper that suggest Greek mythology in their imagery and Greek drama in the way fragility and doubt gnaw away at their facade of bravado and pride.

Graupe-Pillard photographs street people, then blows them up on canvas and draws them in pastels. Then she cuts the figures out of the canvas and, in this show, attaches 15 of them to a large gallery wall. What interests the artist is clearly not only the subject matter, but a human theater of types, gestures and emotions. (Through April 13.)