

Burnside, Madeline. *ARTnews*
(May 1979).

ELEANOR ANTIN (Ronald Feldman Fine Arts): In fleshing out her fantasies Antin has achieved a body of work that is both unique and consistent. Irony is its mainspring: Antin's lack of illusions about the humorous/ridiculous aspects of her fantasy life informs her three-quarter-size puppetry with wit.

In the present show Antin's dream of herself as a ballerina (familiar from earlier video works) has been expanded to embrace the entirety of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Here Antin has become Antinova, the "black ballerina," and in this role interacts (in performance) with the other members of the company, including Stravinsky, Nijinsky and Diaghilev. As a complete work, of which the show here is only a part, Antin's *Before the Revolution* has involved two performances at the Kitchen; various masonite figures on wheels, complete with changes of clothes; elaborate sketches for sets; drawings of costumes and character studies. This is Antin's most complex work to date. Materially it involves greater elaboration than she has previously used, but this is also her most intellectually complex piece. The title refers to the name of the ballet in which Antinova appears as Marie Antoinette as well as the temporal situation of Diaghilev's involvement with the Ballets Russes. In the same convoluted way, Antin has set classical ballet design and dramatization within the context of contemporary performance. Her performance, designs and props become reflections of themselves, a performance within a performance.