

## **"Guns and Roses"**

By Troy Schulze

On the surface, the new show at Anya Tish Gallery recalls happy childhood memories and tooth-rotting sweetness. But there's dark commentary lurking in the work of Texas artists Shannon Cannings and Ann Wood. Cannings paints toy guns with an emphasis on their bright colors and plastic details, like the "wood grain" in the stock of a green water-machine-gun. She paints each toy firearm as if it were mounted on a wall, capturing the glowing shadows cast through colored plastic. One work, *Cross Your Heart*, is an image of an Annie Oakley-style rifle with pink stock and shoulder strap. The way the strap hangs from the gun casts a shadow resembling the shape of a cross-your-heart bra. The seven pieces are all beautiful, and they challenge our recollections of childhood fun with the argument that they teach kids to be violent. Wood's installation *Snare* is an intensely bright scene of bunnies, a tall cake and roses coated in frosting-like substances and what looks like poured pink taffy. The bunnies are taxidermy forms, and the pink "taffy" is actually poured foam. Wood translates the sweet, pleasing attraction of candy and dessert into an image of suffering and encroaching death. It recalls pictures of birds covered in oil from the BP disaster. Emotionally, it sweeps you from enjoying its silliness to seeing it as a symbol of the ultimate humiliation of nature. Through June 4. Anya Tish Gallery, 4411 Montrose, 713-524-2299.