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**Bill Jacobson**

*Julie Saul Gallery  
560 Broadway, at Prince Street  
SoHo  
Through March 23*

The wraithlike figures in Bill Jacobson's photographs are still out of focus, like creatures seen through fog. But Mr. Jacobson has simplified his compositions, giving them new power. Where characters were arranged in tableaux that suggested relationships, the pictures now concentrate on single figures. In one image, for example, a person bends over, arms and legs stretching unnaturally toward the bottom of the frame. In another, a man seen in profile is defined by the resolute jut of his jaw, even though his eyes and mouth have been obliterated by the lack of focus.

In still another example, a nude lying on his side is reduced to a rhythmic collection of broad sweeping lines. Mr. Jacobson accentuates this effect in printing, creating the sense that the subject has been painted in broad brush strokes like a calligraphic figure.

In earlier pieces, Mr. Jacobson seemed to use an extreme lack of sharpness for its somewhat conventional suggestion of emotions so intense that they overwhelmed attempts at clear depiction. Here, though, he implies a more provocative analogy, in which the sharpness of conventional photographs is related to rational thought, while the out-of-focus images suggest the intuitive and mysterious workings of the unconscious.

CHARLES HAGEN