

## UPTOWN

By HILTON KRAMER

Other shows of interest uptown: Gregory Gillespie (Forum, 1018 Madison Avenue, at 79th Street): Although Gregory Gillespie is more or less a Realist in his paintings - he was recently represented in the Pennsylvania Academy's mammoth survey of contemporary American Realism - it is not so much what he depicts in his work, or how he depicts it, as his point of view toward his materials that elicits the viewer's interest. Everything in his art seems to issue from a dour spirit, as if a barely suppressed rage lay behind every image that reaches the canvas.



*Manikin Piece*, 1980, oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches

This gives to the artist's many self-portraits an especially grim quality. One has the impression that the artist does not particularly care for his own looks and that he does not harbor any illusion about the spectator's disagreeing with him. In the most ambitious of these pictures - "Myself Painting a Self-Portrait" - the portrait within the portrait actually breaks out of the Realist mode in order to give us not a mirror image but a grotesque distortion.

It is in the image of this grotesque other self, I suppose, that we have the key to the artist's imaginative world. Certain of the smaller works in the show are given over entirely to such fantasy images, virtually abandoning the Realist mode altogether. Where the tension between Realism and the grotesque is given an unusually strong realization, however, is in the strange still life painting called "Manikin Piece."

In this painting, the busts of two female mannequins, one of them sporting an elaborately colored primitive mask of violent expression, repose on a table, and everything - the mannequins, the mask, the table and the space they occupy - is painted with unusual vigor and precision. It may be that objects rather than people are, after all, Mr. Gillespie's real forte. [Through Feb. 6]