

A EXTRA

EDITED BY
GLORIA
OH L A N D



Richard Hawkins (left),
and Dennis Cooper.

THE SKIN GAME

Reading from his new book *Closer*, **DENNIS COOPER** makes his audience squirm in their black jeans, waxing cool in crystalline prose about boys being worshiped by other boys who then shove massive metal objects up their rectums until they bleed to death. Why mix so many beatings with so much beauty? "I tap into the violence," says Cooper in his alienated pseudo-surfer singsong. "I mean, it's everywhere — right?" Together with artist **RICHARD HAWKINS**, he's curating the already controversial "Against Nature" art/performance series at LACE beginning Jan. 6. "People wrongly criticized us for preferring the topic of desire to activism," explains Hawkins, defending their decision to pose the libido as a force that's at least as potent as AIDS. Cooper's to be trusted; he's spent his whole life thinking about a "so-called gay aesthetic." In the early '80s he published most L.A. writers in his poetry/fiction magazine *Little Caesar*, meantime making a name for himself at Beyond Baroque. He moved to New York after publication of his *Safe*, but his L.A. pals woo the *Artforum* critic back often enough. Why does such a popular guy write on-

ly about "isolated individuals in an anarchic world"? Perhaps the answer lies in his description of a character in *Closer* — "an abused kid who feels being passive is the only way to remain moral in an immoral world."

—Doug Sadownick

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FREE



Hudson

NATURAL MEN WE'RE NOT

Curators Dennis Cooper and Richard Hawkins have thankfully done the unthinkable: pull together a show of gay artists that isn't simply an AIDS show. The exhibition, called *Against Nature*, includes drawing, painting, sculpture, photography and video that use J.K. Huysmans' novel as notorious inspiration. On opening night, riveting gay-to-the-max performance artist Hudson collaborates with writer Steve Lafreniere in their "The Back Way" to offer a "chant from the grave of every faggot and queer that ever walked." This art series by homosexual men struggles to balance hard-core desire with original thoughts on activism. The exhibition looks into a subjectivity changed by AIDS, but not marooned by it. Brace yourself for titillation and much "pleasure of the text," '80s-style.

—Doug Sadownick

Against Nature, LACE, 1804 Industrial St., dwntwn.; opening reception Fri., Jan. 6, 7-10 p.m., perf 10 p.m.; exhibit thru Feb. 12; \$6, \$4 LACE members. (213) 624-5650.