

"CIRCA 1986"

THE HUDSON VALLEY CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

Highlighted work: Rick Prol's "I Have This Cat"

The show: "Circa 1986" features 65 pieces from 47 artists who emerged between 1981 and 1991. Works are from the collections of six New York couples, including Marc and Livia Straus, founders of the arts center. "What we wanted to do was go back and take an honest slice of the '80s, and look at the things that showed up in the art market that were extraordinarily important at that time, and sought after. These were young artists with enormous impact and attention," says Marc Straus. "We're bringing back works that people care about regardless of the market." The show, curated by John Newsom, Nicola Trezzi and Astrid Honold, includes paintings, sculpture, video and installations.

Why this piece: Artists in the 1980s were creating works that were huge and demanding, says Straus, and a perfect example is Rick Prol's "I Have This Cat." Prol, an East Village painter and graffiti artist, rose to fame in the '80s, but despite the brilliance of his work, much of it is unfamiliar to many of today's collectors and curators, he says. Prol's painting, which Straus considers among the best in the show, conveys the spirit of the decade: It's 8 feet high, with a glass panel attached to the bottom on one side. "This is a very odd picture, because it's a rectangular canvas and then there's



"The Long March" by Gilbert & George is one of the works in "Circa 1986," now on display at The Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art in Peekskill.

this crazy appendage on the left that makes it very demanding to hang and live with," he says. "It was part of the real excess of the '80s, and it's just an important piece, important to a lot of artists. This work Prol did was influencing the next generation of painters."

The back story: Straus says Prol intentionally created a work that was off kilter and unwieldy, with its attachment making it difficult to hang in traditional spaces in collectors' homes. "He wanted it that way. And I think his gallery didn't think even then that they could sell it that way, it's so excessive," says Straus.

What else to see: An early plate paint-

ing by Julian Schnabel, Jeff Koons' "Two Ball 50/50 Tank" (a glass and steel tank with two 1985 basketballs submerged in distilled water) and "X Men 1968" by Tim Rollins + K.O.S. Also, be sure to check out the three cars on display in the parking lot, painted by students in Peekskill.

Details: On view through July 2012. The museum is open noon to 6 p.m. weekends, and by appointment. Admission is \$5; \$4 seniors and educators, \$2 students. 1701 Main St., Peekskill. 914-788-0100, www.hvcca.org.

—Linda Lombroso