fooled and gets shot down. Rosler and a few others (mostly working on the West Coast) escape this kind of self-imposed backlash because they are aware of the crucial relationship between audience and art and of the way the audience is manipulated by the art that is available to it.

There is also a growing number of still younger artists who are concerned with this state of affairs. Some are working on the fringes of the art world, having been initially attracted to it by a notion of art they have since found to be a mirage. Others are even less visible as they try to make art in a different context altogether. They are responsible for posters like that showing the Pope before a firing squad as antidote to the mass hysteria of the papal visit. They are responsible for some street pieces, store windows, artists' books, performances, actions, open studios and scruffy artist-organized shows. And for Stefan Eins' Fashion Moda in the South Bronx, which is the only *alternate* space in town that deserves the name it rejects. They are responsible for outreach placement of relatively conventional art objects like John Ahearn's painted plaster heads of local residents in a South Bronx Con Edison office and for public works like Jenny Holzer's anonymous aphorisms, which I happen to think make good "political" art because I happen to think I get the point, though they, too, have a touch of the violence I fear. Like Nicole Gravier's very different media pieces recently shown at Franklin Furnace, Holzer's lists of slogans make me-the-audience *think,* about myths and clichés and propaganda and the slogans I use myself. What I like about this and other such work is that the irony is embedded in it. Here's the old formalist ideal of medium and message merged, rather than one tacked onto the other gratuitously to make a sensation, rather than the medium used to subvert the message.

Some of this art and some of these artists are seen as "punk," though *new wave* is a preferably woozier term. If so, punk comes in two guises: this harsh social commentary retaining an echo of Brechtian irony and of the original British music movement's working-class political force; and retrochic, which sees the audience as "parents"—authorities to be done in. The latter is most visible because it's out for power and because the social branch has for the most part (or for the time being) bowed out of that particular brawl. Retrochic, like its commercial counterpart in fashion advertising, gets shown and occasionally eulogized in the trade magazines and is, I assume, bought now and then by the beleathered hordes who wander through SoHo on weekends seeking a social jolt—otherwise it wouldn't *get* shown and written about.

Because I see retrochic as feeding neatly into the right wing's fury and as playing agent-provocateur to the working classes some retrochic artists claim to identify with, I'd like to see this kind of art rejected. I know some will holler "censorship" (and I'll mutter "selection"—which is another whole can of worms). I know that the intention of this art is to get parents like me to scream Bad Taste! Decadence! and other flattering epithets. I did just that when I read a pseudonymous critic called Peter "Blackhawk" von Brandenburg describing "The Nigger Drawings" as "revolutionary," though I had to laugh when I read they were also "a veil between a pulp-populist catalogue of nuance and a prodigal epicure's prosthetic interpretation of 'Social Lamarckianism.' " We've had this kind of language from the third-string academic Greenbergians, but it seems a bit more incongruous coming from a "movement" which is supposedly opposed to promulgating bullshit like the above. (Imagine any self-respecting punk artist

Jenny Holzer, *Truisms,* Spanish translation, colored photostats in window of Fashion Moda, South Bronx, New York, 1979, 96″ x 40″; a selection of alphabetically arranged "truisms" includes: "To disagree presupposes moral integrity; To volunteer is reactionary; Torture is barbaric; Trading a life for a life is fair enough; True freedom is frightful; Unique things must be the most valuable; Words tend to be inadequate; You get the face you deserve . . . ; You must know where you stop and the world begins . . .; Your oldest fears are the worst ones." (Photo: the artist)