

Art **Previews**

Hyperallergic Spring 2024 New York Art Guide

A guide to this season's museum exhibitions and art events in and around New York City, including the Whitney Biennial.

H Hyperallergic February 2, 2024



Dina Weiss, "Suffragists" (2020-23), yarn and wood, weavings, 8 feet x 38 inches x 8 inches (photo by Dina Weiss, courtesy the artist)

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Textures of Feminist Perseverance

Referencing the inequalities faced by women despite perennial cycles of feminist activism, an exhibition text for this show asks: "How many waves will it take?" Taking urban space as a point of departure for reflections on improving women's lives, labor, and safety, James Gallery brings together 17 artists pondering these possibilities through diverse media including zines, archival research, and needlepoint.

James Gallery at the Graduate Center, CUNY (centerforthehumanities.org)

365 Fifth Avenue, First Floor, Midtown, Manhattan

Feb. 15–May 10

Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space

Textures of Feminist Perseverance

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CUCHIFRITOS GALLERY + PROJECT SPACE

88 Essex Street, No. 21 inside Essex Street Market, artistsallianceinc.org
Wed - Sat 12pm to 6pm

MUST SEE

Textures of Feminist Perseverance

March 1 - April 27, 2024

Reception: Friday, March 1st, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

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Sarah Ahmed, Mimi Biyao Bai, Sonya Blesofsky, Langdon Graves, Sara Jimenez, Martine Kaczynski, Rhea Karam, Amy Khoshbin, Fay Ku, Ani Liu, Jodie Lyn-Kee-Chow, Jen Mazza, Deborah Mesa-Pelly, Ashley Minner Jones, Natalie Moore, Ellie Murphy, Dina Weiss

Presented in two venues—Cuchifritos Gallery and The James Gallery—Textures of Feminist Perseverance asks how women’s daily experiences and contributions are recorded in the public spheres of our physical, virtual, and social lives. On this occasion, Cuchifritos Gallery is very pleased to present two projects, Mimi Biyao Bai’s Net within the gallery space and the collaborative project I Pledge on Essex Market’s exterior windows.

Net, artist Mimi Biyao Bai’s site-responsive project, contemplates safety, survival, and visibility. Drawing a parallel between camouflage and assimilation, Bai considers both as labor-intensive adaptations for survival that selectively reveal and/or conceal.

Obscuring the traditional white box of the gallery in a wash of safety orange—a color often worn by hunters due to its high visibility to most humans and the difficulty of discernment it causes for prey

'Mixed Greens at Space 101'*101 North Third Street, near*
Berry Street, Williamsburg
Through Sunday*

A good sense of Williamsburg's polymorphic art scene comes through in this multimedia show of 26 artists. Well-schooled polish is where it's at in painting, to judge by Paul Plante's binocular-lens close-ups of birds, Alyson Sholtz's organic abstraction, Michael Houston's vivid, graffiti-inflected scrolls, Harold Nolan's woozy evocations of drug culture, Russell Nachman's superbly wrought versions of sci-fi book covers, and baked enamel panels by Ryan McGinness that look like a cross between corporate logos and Myron Stout.

Sculpture also tends to be on the tidy side, from Connie Walsh's blue vinyl alcove seat with soundtrack to Jean Shin's Tower of Babel built from stacked Rolodex cards. So does installation, well represented by Marguerite Kahrl, who made a fine solo debut at Derek Eller in Chelsea earlier in the year and here mixes up painting, sculpture and cryptic narratives.

Ms. Kahrl does ingenious things with crafty materials, a strategy that accounts for some of the best work here. Rob Conger embroiders tabloid portraits in yarn (Heidi Fleiss is one of his subjects); Dina Weiss fashions cityscapes from yarn and glue. Christina Mazzalupo enshrines emblematic tableaux — fastidious but funky — in shadow boxes, and Lee Stoetzel produces what look like driftwood lamps.

All in all, this neo-folk, cottage-industry approach is an interesting way for young artists to get back to handcrafting while bypassing academic formalism, and the results just happen to fit the scale of the average Brooklyn tenement apartment.

HOLLAND COTTER

Holland Cotter; Mixed Greens at Space 101, May 19, 2001; The New York Times,

Art With a Soft Touch

By Hank Hoffman

Soft

Exploring the material world at untitled (space), New Haven, through Feb. 1, 772-2709.

Soft. A simple four-letter word. Or is it? "Soft" can describe kittens, cuddly balls of fur. But "soft" can also have negative connotations—a lack of resolution where resolution is required or a problem for which Bob Dole is hawking a cure. "Soft" is a quality with meaning that is contingent upon context and contrast.

There is a wide range of media in *Soft*, a show at untitled (space) curated by Debbie Hesse. Many of the works embody the concept of "soft" in their materials. In some, the concept is evoked on a visual level with materials that might be dubbed "hand." The complex nature of "soft"—which is to say the complex nature of language and the reality it represents—courses through these works individually and in relation to each other.

Plastic fencing, cable ties, steel: soft? In Joseph Fucigna's two wall sculptures, these prickly or hard materials are woven together into thick nests, layers of twisting mesh. "Orangeade" uses thin bands of neon orange fencing looping in and around itself like hundreds of wrigly snakes. It is fastened together on a frame of steel wire and studded with lime and charretruse cable ties. "Black & Blue" follows a similar strategy, the bruising difference being that the fencing consists of black and blue plastic and the cable ties are blue and purple.

The colors are hot and cool, respectively, rather than warm or soft. But while the objects don't look soft, they are soft in terms of their edges and contours. Fencing defines boundaries, but in this case, those boundaries are fluid, not definitive.

Hardness of material toyed with the illusion of softness also characterizes Mary Temple's two acrylic paint wall installations, "Pinky Pink" and "Clean." Temple uses hardened acrylic, much of it in undulating, pockmarked sheets like moth-eaten plastic wrap. There's a softness in the flow and curves of the works and in the wraithlike shadows they throw on the wall to which they are attached. But there is also a hardness and definition to

some of the edges that creates a strong sense of line.

Lines and grids inform Clint Jukkala's two untitled oil paintings. With their intersecting squares and overlapping lines, their pathways and boundaries, Jukkala's imagery suggests networks or circuitry. Parallels, sharp corners, edges. In this case, "soft" is a quality of the colors. His linework, carefully applied with long brush strokes, consists of ethereal baby blues, pinks, whites and hazy yellows. The background color in one is a muted yellow. In the other, a washed-out green pastel hints translucently at subtler grids beneath.

Dina Weiss uses soft material to model harder substances. With wood blocks covered with yarn, her "Yellow Gradation" forms a two-sided brick wall—widest at its base and comprised of just three bricks at the top—that meets in one right angle corner. The top two layers of blocks are cloaked in white yarn. Each successive two layers of bricks below are in differing color yarn, progressing from soft yellows through oranges to a rich brown.

James Clark's "Homage to Dave Carter: a poet and seker, #1-3" is an installation triptych. The works are long tubes suspended from the ceiling. They contain fluorescent lights housed in a semi-circular metal backing (covered in two out of the pieces by fake blue fur or Atrouturf). In front of the lights are clear plastic bags and at the bottom is a fan. By using motion detectors to activate the lights and fan, the sculptures soften the border between work and spectator. As you approach, the light comes on and the fan inflates the clear plastic. The works come alive in our presence and remain dormant in our absence.

Light is also a signifier of "soft" in Leo Villareal's installations. "Synth," a 30-minute DVD loop playing in the back project room, is

Mary Temple's "Clean" in acrylic paint.

an abstract trip into computer-generated pulsing lights that issue out of darkness to the accompaniment of droning electronic music. The lights and circuitry housed in a translucent Plexiglas box give "Open Air" a similar effect, minus the sound. Behind the whitish Plexiglas diffusion, pink and orange lights wax and wane in seeming randomness.

Several artists use fabric to create soft sculpture. Janice Redman encases everyday objects—rocks, a rolling pin, an oar, even a wheelbarrow—in muslin, softening their surfaces while retaining the definitiveness of contour. Jane Miller employs an array of fabrics to create fantastic objects that suggest organic forms.

Eric Conrad's "Couples" series more directly references figurative art. Using steel and fabric, Conrad crafts handmade dolls with human-like torsos and limbs and heads that seem either human or animal. He poses them together, either as couples or as the mutant collision between a cloning accident and a game of Twister gone awry. One of these couples is touching—a parent-like figure embraces a smaller,

darker child. But most are disturbing. Figures collapse on each other or have their twisted forms intersect each other in an orgy of despair. The playfulness of their figures and their association with childhood stands in stark contrast to their emotional extremism.

Sarah Gjerston's untitled work packs the hardest political punch in the *Soft* show. She has stitched together an air mattress in the design of the American flag. But instead of using the good ol' red, white and blue, Gjerston composed her stars and stripes with camouflage print and olive green fabric. A timed blower inflates this puffed-up bed of militarism, stops and allows it to deflate, then pumps it up again.

A thematic show like *Soft* is interesting not only for the illumination of a particular concept. Perhaps more important are the insights into the art-making process. The various responses to the theme of "soft" reflect not only individual creativity in action but, gathered together, the opportunity to play them off each other. By seeing the world in different ways, we can see the world in new ways. Is that so hard?

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND MIXED GREENS, N.Y.



Hoffman, Hank, Art With a Soft Touch,
January 2003; New Haven Advocate



Artist Scott Richter made what looks like a large slice of cake out of huge globs of oil paint.

AS DOCUMENTED

'Material World' exudes innocence

BY ZACHARY LEWIS
OF THE PATRIOT-NEWS

Sometimes, adults just don't get it. No, we're not talking about "Pokemon" or the latest boy band. We're talking about contemporary art.

More specifically, we're talking about "Material World," this year's exhibit in VanGo! at the Susquehanna Art Museum's educational gallery on wheels: It is a place where it really helps to adopt a child's aesthetic sensibility.

The exhibit opened with a reception late last month and is available for rental by schools and other facilities. Adults can check it out during First Friday celebrations downtown or during the 13th annual Harrisburg Gallery Walk, which takes place today.

For "Material World," VanGo! program director Jessica Lantz brought together the works of 14 contemporary artists, most of them living and working in New York City. A sense of innocence permeates the exhibit, although it has a serious dimension: These are mature artists purposely reverting to immature techniques.

Many of the artists have embedded a resonant cultural point into what might merely be cute. Adia Milten's immaculate doll house, for example, looks like almost any girl's plaything, although, in fact, it doubles as commentary on low-income housing. E.V. Day's wax-laden "Mummified Barbie" too, will forever alter the way you look at the popular doll.

But the thrust of the exhibit is to prove that the potential for creativity is all around us. The contents of "Material World" are often toylike: bright, fuzzy and fun. The urge to touch is hard to resist.

More generally, the exhibit seems to scream the point that the stuff of art is not only oil paints and bronze, but also

'WORLD'/VanGo! exhibit exudes innocence

From Page E1

utterly common and functional materials.

Lantz, curator of "Material World," says that's a concept many people of the adult persuasion can't quite understand. "Adults are harder to please. They have a specific idea of what art is to them. And this challenges that idea. Some will think this is cool, some won't. It's mixed. Some can't find an appreciation for it."

Children, on the other hand, she said, apparently have a built-in appreciation for it. "The images in this show are very common to things that surround their [children's] lives," continued Lantz, as she described her first foray into curating. It is her job to find ways to link VanGo! exhibits such as "Material World" to regular classroom studies.

"Kids learn the best when they can relate it to their lives. This show is perfect in that respect. It teaches them that

on the wall, which is a concept most kids aren't exposed to. You can create something from what you're familiar with."

Some of the works in "Material World," in fact, are made from materials you might say you're a little too familiar with. Jean Shin made "Sportscluster II," a knotted sculpture, out of old athletic socks. A major component of Nancy Bowen's "Grandma's Place" is hair.

Other items are perhaps less personal, but made from no less common items. The art element, one could argue, enters in what's done to them.

Dina Weiss used yarn, not watercolors, to convey cityscapes. Scott Richter made what looks like a large slice of cake out of huge globs of oil paint left to dry straight from the tube. And who would have thought it was possible to make a sculpture of Buddha out of shoelaces?

Television undoubtedly surrounds children's lives. Many

"Material World" an intriguing video installation by David McKenzie, the first work of its kind in VanGo!

Jan Dawson, an artist whose work also is on display in the art museum's current exhibition, "Let's Get to Work," melted a pair of Rubik's Cubes to Dalí-like effect. "Blue Sweater," by Elizabeth McGrath, looks like a warm piece of clothing, but instead is merely a long (and useless as a sweater), crocheted piece.

If "Material World" proves too deceptively simple for you, that's OK, Lantz says. It might be better to try to view the exhibit through the eyes of your young son or daughter.

In other words, deeper issues are present, but there's no need to overanalyze. "It's not just about the artwork," she says, "it's also about the bus. The whole experience

of looking at art on a bus.

"They're just fun pieces. You don't have to try to figure them out. That's appealing to me as an educator. It's not a tragedy if they don't get it. At least they're experiencing it and being a part of it."

Zachary Lewis may be reached at 255-8266 or zlewis@patriot-news.com.

Zachary Lewis; 'Material World' exudes innocence, September 8, 2001; The Patriot News

Artists Elevate the Stuff of Our Everyday

By L. P. STREITFELD

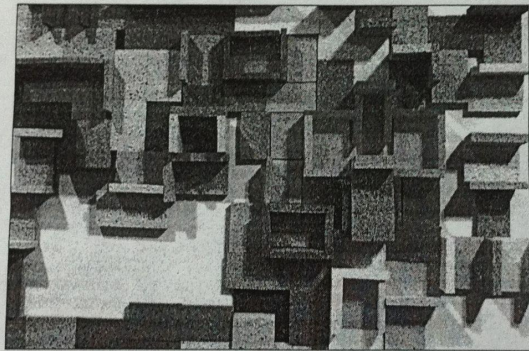
Too much work created within the narrow confines of the New York art scene of recent years has brought about the endless loop of world-weary cynicism that has effectively alienated the public. What is eagerly anticipated right now is new life, the birth of a movement to capture the imagination of both artists and audiences.

At Art in General this month, all three concurrent exhibitions work together with an uncommon synergy and freshness, pointing the way out of the disintegration of postmodernism.

The artists incorporate everyday objects—as homely and overlooked as lint and trashed Lotto cards—to infuse their work with personal meaning and, at times, real beauty.

The beautiful becomes seductive even before you enter the building. *Que tenga rejas de bronce: Soleares* (Let the Prison Bars Be Bronze), Elena del Rivero's window installation, displays many thousands of magnetized straight pins, seen through steel bars and framed by copper windowpanes. The piece, says the artist's statement, is meant to simulate a convent's barred street window.

While the metaphorical meanings of the objects, metals, and song (the voice of a Flamenco singer can be



Detail from Victoria Palermo's *Boxology*, 2001

CARL GLASSMAN

heard) will probably escape the viewer, the effect is otherworldly and profound. The piece continues in the elevator as the viewer-listener hears the haunting voice of the singer, punctuated by the amplified sound of pins dropping.

Stepping onto the sixth floor, we encounter the sponges, cheap toys, yarn, cow dung (bronzed), staples, artificial food coloring, etc. of "Material Whirled," a group show of 14 artists curated by Laura Lobdell. Fun in its inventive use of materials, disturbing in its statement about our throwaway

culture, the artists make much out of very little, and perhaps that is the most meaningful message of all.

Aimee Mower's *Tasty Choice Sampler #5* makes peace with domesticity by way of a new approach to Op Art, creating optical designs by painting with cake decorating gels. With *Brick Yarn Painting* and *Yarn/Wallpaper Painting*, Dina Weiss uses craft to transform fabric into art that erases boundaries between craft and painting.

The shape, color and texture of everyday sponges bring to life Victoria

Palermó's *Boxology*, a sculptural wall piece that extends to the ceiling.

Alyson Shotz challenges the notion of craft as decorative art through her *White Swarm*, depicting, we are told, "nature's proliferation." The use of plastic, mostly surgical tubing, as the material of choice is paradoxical to say the least.

Two artists do an exceptional job of expressing the depressing nuttiness of American waste. Jean Shin's *Chance City* is a giant house of cards composed of \$15,771 worth of discarded instant lottery tickets. Patrick Miceli's *Made in China* consists of a pile of 20,000 plastic toys that to many parents will look like their child's yield from a year's worth of Happy Meals.

On the fourth floor, artist in residence Allan deSouza creates a photographic landscape series, using the detritus he finds on the street nearby. A native of Kenya raised in England, deSouza says his *Terrain* is about displacement and "identity, land, and translocations."

On Tuesday, June 12 at 7:30 p.m. there will be an informal discussion with the artists, followed by an exhibition tour.

"Material Whirled" and "Que tenga rejas de bronce" at Art in General, 79 Walker St. To June 30. Tues-Sat. 12-6

L.P. Streitfeld; Artist Elevate Stuff of our Everyday, June 01, The Tribeca Tribune, Vol. VII

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The Vitrine pop-up Critics' pick

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(212) 343-8670 | thevitrine.com
Subway: 6 to Spring St

Impress your hip, artsy friend by bringing him or her to this four-day temporary shop in the Fitzroy Gallery, hosted by the Vitrine, an online boutique that sells indie, handmade accessories. Peruse Brooklyn artist Sarah Crowner's watercolor silk charmeuse scarves for \$135 (usually \$200), designer Dino Sanchez's trio of matches printed with the words keep air fresh (set of ten for \$15) and Dina Weiss hand-sewn one-of-a-kind Statue of Liberty pillows (\$75).

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