

Time Out New York

October 9-16, 2003

Issue 419



Lisa Sigal, *Ramshackle*, 2003.

“Abstraction” Artists Space, through Oct 18 (see Soho).

The title of Eugenie Joo’s new curatorial venture, “Abstraction,” was inspired by a reemergence of abstract art rooted in the tenets of Constructivism, a trend this show attempts to survey. According to the gallery, the four artists assembled here address “issues of narrativity, architecture and craft through abstraction.” While the underlying concept may be somewhat obscure, the works selected by Joo create a coherent and energetic exhibit that highlights their skillful manipulation of space, both architectural and pictorial.

The most ambitious piece—Lisa Sigal’s *Ramshackle*, an explosive wall painting that utilizes the imagery of a construction site—incorporates existing architectural elements (pipes, windows, light fixtures, doors) as surfaces to be covered with paint. By propping slabs of Sheetrock against the wall and using trompe l’oeil to suggest a fictive space behind it, Sigal creates a complex spatial interplay between the literal and

the illusionistic. In contrast, Yunhee Min’s *Slow Sliding* enlists the planar surface of a sloping false wall, painted in four clashing colors, to disorient the viewer, a strategy that revisits architectural sculpture of the early ’70s. Optical illusions—bulging out and curving in—resulting from the dissonant hues add to the viewer’s perceptual confusion.

Adopting an even more effective approach to disorientation, Jessica Bronson’s *Perpetual Perceptual* nods to ’60s Op Art. Five strips of LCD affixed to the wall, programmed to pulse rapidly at different intervals, emit white light that momentarily blinds the spectator and activates the surrounding space. More understated, Jessica Rankin’s organoid panels, which draw on craft-inspired feminist art, use fabric to provide a delicate ground for densely embroidered texts and schematic cartographic landscapes. Taken together, these works illustrate the gap that can occur between theory and practice. In this show, a compelling visual outcome clearly trumps an intended curatorial conceit.

—Eugenie Tsai