

ART

Small Art

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This was to have been the week Frank Stella bowed in with a series of aluminum reliefs larger and more complex than last year's. That show, alas, has been postponed until January. The absence of Stella has considerably lightened this review, prepared as I was to deal with large scale, heft, and heavy paint and glitter. All the art I did see this week seems united by modesty, reticence and understatement.

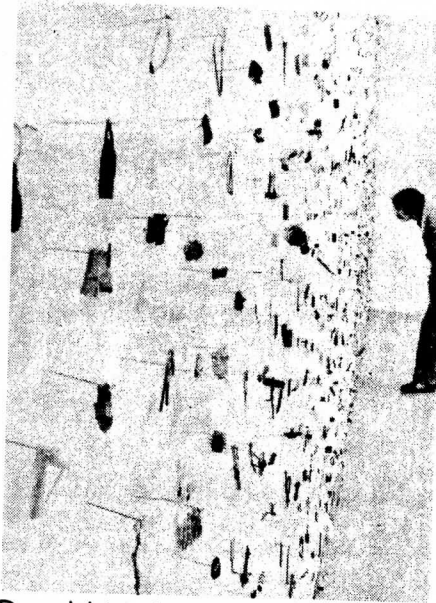
Anyone who lives in a small apartment, as I do, knows the aggregate of nuisance objects that can accumulate in corners — broom straws, rings from pop top cans, and all kinds of wrappers. Donald Lipski has memorialized such ephemera in *Gathering Dust* (at Artists Space, 105 Hudson, through December 16). He has taken these objects and affixed them with pins to a long white wall. The result is the equivalent of an allover painting, with each pinned object like a daub or nodule of paint, making for a very lively surface. Your only allover view of the work, however, is the sidelong one when you enter the gallery. It's too big to take in while standing in front of it.

You're supposed to read it moving from right to left, because it's chronological and autobiographical. Some of the items were collected on a trip to Europe and Lipski says when he looks at certain objects he recalls certain cities. One does appreciate the care Lipski lavishes on these objects: a bobby pin will be carefully wrapped in twine, for example.

I'm reminded of Oldenburg's *Mouse Museum* which just had a run at the Whitney. There was a panoply of objects set before us in that installation, too, but Oldenburg's object are much more evolved than Lipski's. You could point to something in Oldenburg's collection and say, "Gee, I'd like to have that." You have no such impulse with Lipski.

The piece is a good index of the tenor of our time, spelling the difference between the dazzling art scene of the Sixties when Oldenburg's concepts flowered and the down-at-heels present when most art movements seem prefaced by "post." In the face of this, Lipski's display resuscitates beauty from nothingness and this is where the art is.

The straw mat — made in China — in



Donald Lipski's *Gathering Dust*

my apartment is unravelling, so I am especially attuned to Richard Jarden's *Mats* (also at Artists Space, through the 10th) which look as strong as chain mail. The mats are woven of paper matches laid end to end and lacquered so they gleam.

Jarden has painted an image on each: a brimmed hat, a beanie, or a pair of cowboy boots. A table and chairs with one chair tipped over is the most successful since their outlines conform to the alignment of the matches. Jarden also paints on the date each piece was made. It's amazing he can make a piece in one day. Robert Motherwell writes the specific date on his collages, too. He's so sure of his inborn elegance he can make several collages in one day. Recalling this made me realize that Jarden's pieces are collage, too. The matrix itself is one big collage.