

Weekend

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Art: Summertime Discoveries at the Galleries

By JOHN RUSSELL

THE summer hang — so often spoken of in the art world at this season — is not, as might be supposed, an archaic form of capital punishment. It is a device by which dealers' galleries give a limited exposure to this artist or that and wait to see what comes of it.

The artists in question often come in fours, fives, sixes or even tens. There is, therefore, a built-in unfairness about a survey that leaves most of them out. But the artists mentioned here are the ones whose work grabbed this visitor and stayed with him all the way home.

Of the six artists, one who gave this visitor some quiet pleasure was a transplanted New Yorker named Jill Glegerich. As was once said in the 19th century, "A strong case cannot be stated too gently." Miss Glegerich is a sculptor who works on a small scale, within a limited gamut of color and in an idiom that could be called Post-Constructivist.

A shift of tone from tan to ginger, a shift of emphasis from flatness to the lowest of low relief, an echo here and there of the vanished Russian avant-garde — these are the kinds of material with which she works. What she does with them is not heavy art, but it's good art, and art that deserves a larger showing.

Another artist of true quality is Megan Williams, who lures us into an installation that takes the form of a deep white cave in which black monsters lurk. The monsters are benign, the cave looks as if it were just back from the laundry, and the recorded noise is that of drops of California rain falling with a steady persistence onto California cans. A free-running imagination is the mark of this piece, in which nothing outlasts its welcome or comes on too strong.

Mitchell Syrop is a young artist whose speciality is the parodied ad — or, to be more precise, the ad-type photograph to which a subversive text has been added. (It says something about the state of the advertising industry in California that Mr. Syrop was spotted as a gifted prankster every time he presented himself as a candidate for employment.)

Some of his ideas have real bite, as

when the biggest limousine in the business pulls up at the curb, and the caption says "Not Long for This World." But there are some very clever people in advertising, and it's difficult to outsmart them. There is also an ancient tradition of radical parody, and it's difficult to top that, either. Still, Mr. Syrop has some snappy one-liners. One example in this show reads "All Men Are Created Equal . . . but only machines have guarantees." (Through July 16.)

Also of interest this week:

"The Los Angeles-New York Exchange" (Artists Space, 105 Hudson Street): Though not a summer hang, the show at Artists Space has somewhat the character of one, in that it introduces six California artists, most of whom will be unfamiliar to New Yorkers. Concurrently, a show of six artists from New York can be seen at the facility known as LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions).