

# The New York Times

## ART REVIEW

# A Chance to Fill Up on Visual Treats

By BENJAMIN GENOCCHIO

**"ARTIST in the Marketplace"** at the Bronx Museum of the Arts is an easy sell. Now in its 24th year, this annual professional development program, followed by a group exhibition of work by participants, was founded with the goal of giving emerging artists networking hints and handy career-management skills. With program admission competitive, the culminating exhibition is always worth seeing. It's also a good barometer of new trends in art.

This year's exhibition seems fresher and livelier than in recent years. It is partly because of the dizzying diversity of media, with the 37 participants, culled from a pool of 800, presenting a buffet of tasty visual treats. Some hybrid concoctions are even here, like an alpine landscape painting-cum-environment using light bulbs, paint tins and menthol mouthwash in one of the museum's dark utility closets. On first visit, it's this work that gave me the creeps.

Over all, the exhibition confirms that video continues to captivate the imaginations of talented young artists. Jen DeNike, Carol Irving, Heidrun Holzfand, Shin-Il Kim, Songyi Kim, Kris Sabatelli and Letha Wilson have all contributed excellent videos, ranging in style and subject matter from a documentary-style video of a woman in her briefs undergoing a polygraph test (Irving) to a bizarre tape of a naked man roaming a swamp (DeNike).

Shin-Il Kim contributes the show's most accessible and enjoyable video installation. Titled "Water" (2003), it consists of drawings (made of minimal marks on paper, done with a non-functioning pen) animated on video at 30 drawings per second to create the impression of somebody washing his hands under a running tap. The hand-washing is accompanied by sounds of running water, which add a marvelous sense of verisimilitude.

Mr. Kim is one of four Korean artists in this year's exhibition, the others being Songyi Kim, Miyoung Sohn and Haegeon Kim (who was born in Los Angeles but lived and studied in Seoul). Curiously, all of them possess an ability to make clever works that stop you for a split second, just long enough for your brain to figure out what is going on and then begin to understand the deeper meaning of the piece. A case in point is Songyi Kim's wonderful animated video of dozens of overlapping self-portraits.

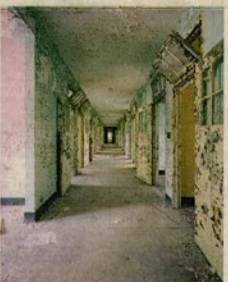
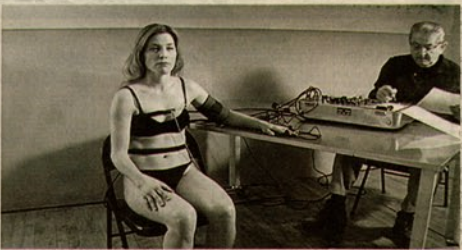
There is also a resurgence in sculpture among young artists; or at least a return to the making of three-dimensional forms. Making is the key word, for much of this new sculpture appears handmade, as opposed to the anonymous and machine-fabricated stuff popular in the 1990's. This development dovetails with a continuing obsession among younger artists with all kinds of craft practices, including knitting, sewing, collage and drawing.

Among the sculptors here, a number of them like to redeem things discarded or de-based (Noah Loesberg's corrugated cardboard modular bracket, Naz Shahrokhi's column of folded newspaper, Phoebe Washburn's ladder-like structure made of colored wood off-cuts), while others play with materials (Steven Fishman's wax and crayon replicas of steel girders, Ms. Sohn's aluminum foil replicas of everyday objects). All are adept at their craft.

Lydia Yee and Amy Rosenblum Martin, the show's curators, write in the exhibition catalog that a concern with a "systematic process of knowing or creating" underpins a lot of work here. This is a shrewd observation, validated through numerous examples like Joel Murphy's use of toaster technology to make an army of robotic devices, or A. J. Bocchino's painting made of hundreds of categorized, color-coded headlines from The New York Times.

These days, politics seems to be beside the point of art's role in American society. Sadly, we want things that can sell, and little more. But happily a bunch of artists in this exhibition demand a greater prerogative for art. Artists making trouble here (this is my kind of art) include David

From the top, "NY Times Headlines" by A. J. Bocchino; "Swing Low" by Jen DeNike; "Bearing Truth" by Carol Irving; and "Corridor, Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital, Morris Plains, New Jersey" by Philip Boehler.



McQueen with his stock certificates from bankrupt corporations, which recoup value as art, and Laura Sue Phillips and her snapshot photographs of her own ephemeral paintings on sidewalk trash bags and other junk.

Liza McConnell gets my vote for imaginative flair. The 30-year-old Brooklyn artist commandeered a dark utility closet to create an alpine landscape painting around the walls using light shined through old paint tins. The heavy smell of menthol mouthwash intensifies the "alpine" atmosphere. This piece is so weird it took me by surprise. It also drew a smile, which is rare

for such hard-core art.

So far I've mentioned about 20 artists, meaning half the exhibition has been glossed over without comment. This is unfair, for there are other engaged, thoughtful works here by Karla Roberts, Valerie Hegarty, Amy Chan, Gina Fuentes Walker, Phillip Buehler, Jason Lujan, among others. In a jaded world, their passionate spirit is refreshing.

"Artist in the Marketplace 24," is at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse, the Bronx, through June 20. Information: (718) 681-6900.