

Art

Time Out

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"The Pursuer"

★★★★★

Greene Naftali, through Aug 13
(see Chelsea)

Summer group exhibitions, whether guest-curated or assembled in-house, tend to fall into one of three camps: the crushingly simple, the shamelessly arbitrary or the teasingly obscure. Greene Naftali's "The Pursuer" is notable in that it manages to span the last two, while remaining a fairly diverting selection of stuff. Taking its title from a Julio Cortázar short story that delves into "the elastic nature of time," the show juxtaposes painterly abstraction with found-object assemblage, obtuse diagrammatics with quasidocumentary figuration. Much of the work is box-fresh, but there are injections of mid-'80s

cuteness from Candy Jernigan and early-'90s nuttiness from Paul Sharits. And while the installation could hardly be called elegant, it does hide one or two enjoyable surprises around its corners.

In the small front gallery and in the middle of the main space, Haegue Yang's teetering constructions of drying racks, blinds and plastic doodads play on the formal oddity of everyday fixtures and fittings, while Josef Strau's pseudodomestic tableau of floor lamps, paintings and a poster sparks a casual but strangely satisfying interaction between the decorative and the functional. Jon Pestoni and Ida Ekblad both immerse themselves in the material and chromatic richness of oil paint—the former with a light, fresh touch, the latter via labored impasto. In the back gallery, Alex

Bag's abrasive parody of daytime TV from 1997 sits rather uncomfortably with two effervescent new abstractions by Kerstin Braetsch. The curatorial intention here may have been to bend time via an intergenerational mix-and-match, but the work itself needs no such propping up.
—*Michael Wilson*

PHOTOGRAPHS CLOCKWISE: COURTESY ARTIST SPACE; COURTESY BETTY CUNINGHAM GALLERY; COURTESY GREENE NAFTALI

