rachel uffner

Time Out New York

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Melting sensuality into abstraction, “Cosmo” sets an early benchmark for summer group exhibitions with its enjoyably lighthearted vibe. The show’s relaxed play with material and color begins in the gallery’s hallway with Polly Apfelbaum’s Big Family, two old pastel-striped pillowcases scattered with pink-dyed velvet zits in a combination that’s a lot more charming than it sounds. Apfelbaum, the exhibit’s elder statesperson, also contributes a velvet sheet patterned with barcodelike bands of softly bleeding colored ink, and best of all, five abstract ceramic plaques, employing a muted palette that exploits the glaze’s textural subtleties to the fullest. Deft mixtures of strokes, scrapes and extrusions, they are small wonders.

Also venturing into ceramics is Zachary Leener, whose dildo-ish Gazzelloni Tusk is a striated column of polymer clay mounted on the upturned end of a long steel pole. A pair of jolly, beachy pastel abstractions framed in apple-green fiberglass by the same artist are less overtly sexual but hinge nonetheless on gleefully intertwining forms. Two pointillist canvases by Graham Anderson also reference an exuberant physicality. In one, two rows of penises dangle one above the other like strings of bunting; in the other, a pair of melonlike globes are penetrated by speckled strips of color. Anya Kielar pulls apart the fibers of a piece of burlap to depict a female nude, and uses layers of patterned scrim to veil the bust of a Lady Knight. Both works, like “Cosmo” as a whole, align looking with an easy pleasure.—Michael Wilson

Rachel Uffner Gallery
170 Suffolk Street
New York, NY 10002

+1 212 274 0064
info@racheluffnergallery.com