



rachel
uffner
gallery

47 Orchard Street, New York, NY 10002

Abstraction in Bloom

By XICO GREENWALD, Special to the Sun | May 9, 2013

Among the trendy bars and shops of the Lower East Side, two galleries on Orchard Street are holding their own, exhibiting stylish, innovative abstract works exploring subtle relationships of shape and color.



Bob Zoell, No title, c. 1998

McKenzie Fine Art is presenting new works by Don Voisine, hard-edged, geometric shapes painted with modulated tones of blacks and off-whites sandwiched between bars of vivid color. The oil-on-wood abstractions here have fastidious surfaces, harmoniously combining glossy, matte and semi-reflective graphite finishes. In *Heed*, 2012, barely differentiated hues of yellow horizontal stripes frame a broken black cross. In the center of the composition a dark black octagon's minutely adjusted angles make straight edges appear to warp. The negative shapes are thin triangles that hug the perimeter of the design, a thoughtful composition implying cyclical movement.

Powdery blue bars frame a thick, black asterisk in *View*, 2013. Implied one-point perspective adds spatial tension to the composition and, between the black arms of the asterisk, the cream-colored background forms pointy triangles. A rectangle painted with graphite pigment floats in the center, an elegant gray void.

Just a few doors down, Rachel Uffner Gallery is displaying abstractions by Bob Zoell and Wyatt Kahn. Zoell, a Los Angeles-based artist who has created a number of covers for *The New Yorker*, is showing a selection of abstract works from the 1990s. Inspired by spatial relationships first identified in printed texts, the Los Angeles artist crosses out words with colored blocks and then transfers the geometric compositions to metal supports where small paintings are made with high-gloss enamel.

Kahn, a Brooklyn-based artist fresh out of grad school, has a refined aesthetic. His abstractions are assembled shapes of delicately tinted panels stretched over with raw canvas. The works are arranged into bulging, wobbly rectangles with the finesse of an expert mason.

Gallery-goers seeking an alternative to the warehouse-sized, austere exhibition spaces that dominate Chelsea's far west side will find a different art world on the Lower East Side. Adopted home for generations of immigrants, the neighborhood's historic tenements connect the galleries here to New York City history.

Since the New Museum for Contemporary Art relocated to the Bowery in 2007, a number of galleries from 57th Street and Chelsea have followed suit. Like the neighboring coffee shops, designer boutiques and bodegas, the galleries here are open both Saturday and Sunday and the artwork is accessible, openly participating in New York's dynamic creative commercial culture. These exhibitions present visitors with elegant, fine-tuned abstractions set in a historically rich, quintessentially New York context.

Bob Zoell/Wyatt Kahn, on view through June 2, 2013, Rachel Uffner Gallery,
47 Orchard Street, New York, 212-274-0064, www.racheluffnergallery.com