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Review

Exhibitions

Trance

Flipside Gallery through December 14

BY JENNIFER DALTON

THIS FOUR-PERSON exhibition, featuring work by Tom Bills, Linda Darling, Robin Hill and Stephen Moore, is the second exhibition mounted by Flipside, a new gallery in Williamsburg. True to its title, the works shown are invariably contemplative, if not always quiet or tame.

Stephen Moore shows several illuminated sculptures, each consisting of a neon tube intersecting a rectangular glass container filled with a semi-transparent food such as Jello, milk or dozens of cracked raw eggs. Each container is open on the top, horizontally bisected by a bluish-white neon tube, and filled to the brim with its unappetizing liquid. When I saw the show, five days after it opened, the milk in *UNTITLED*, 1993, had begun to putrify, its surface curdled with solid yellowish gunk. Surprisingly, the piece is still lovely.

EMBRYOS, 1997, consisting of dozens of eggs in a square glass cube and also pierced by a blueish-white horizontal neon tube, showed less severe signs of aging. *CHERRY LEMON BLUEBERRY SUBLIME*, a three-part work using red, yellow and blue Jello, fared the best. The liquids were clear, showing off the neon piercing them, and bubbles clung

to the edges of the glass recalling Andres Serrano's plastic religious figures floating in urine. Though Serrano is one obvious comparison here, Moore is playful, experimental, and un-controlling. There is no iconography in the work, no hints as to any further content than the glee of light, color and putrifying liquids.

Linda Darling's color and black-and-white photographs show the progress of a firefly upon film it was allowed to stroll upon and expose. The results are far from random-looking; it's hard to believe the photographs aren't unfocused and abstracted portraits of lines of Christmas lights or Vegas signage. The strings of glowing circles loop and curl and repeat in surprising patterns — and even where the illuminations pile on top of one another, the clumps are elegant and the composition looks intended.

The most charming detail in the photographs is the scratchy evidence of the firefly's feet as it walked around on the film. Darling uses photography to convey and document time, in addition to place. Her works, all titled *LUMENS (FIREFLY)*, 1996, have the aura of record, evidence and documentation.

Robin Hill shows process-oriented sculptures, such as the Fluxus-sounding *PLACE TAPE ON PAPER. EXPOSE TO LIGHT. WAIT. #2*, 1997, a cyanotype made from exposing light-sensitive paper through clumps of tape in patterns resulting in a large blue and white abstract composition. Like Darling's photographs, Hill's cyanotype recalls the process of object and event documentation, particularly X-rays.

Hill's other work, a sculpture, *9 PLY*, 1996, uses wax and thick cotton string to create a three-dimensional beige and white drawing directly on the gallery wall. Both works juxtapose properties of line and gesture associated with drawing with the materiality of

sculptural objects.

Tom Bills completes the bill with two small-scale abstract sculptures in interlocking cast concrete, lead and steel, their squat, strange yet symmetrical forms provocatively titled *TWO MOTHERS*, 1997 and *THE PAST ONE HOUR*, 1997. Though Bills' sculptures are quietly engaging, they don't seem entirely at home in the company of the other more playful and ephemeral work shown here. They have a dense presence which seems to require more emotional space than they are given in the gallery, and could even benefit from being seen out-of-doors.

As it is they provide a counterpoint, a dissenting opinion on the method of meditation, and perhaps that is what they were meant to achieve.

Editor's Note: Flipside is located at 84 Withers Street, 3rd Floor Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and is open Sundays 1-6 pm and by appointment.

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