

the village

VOICE

June 23, 1998

In Store

'The Crest
Hardware Show'

558 Metropolitan Avenue
Williamsburg, Brooklyn
Through July 3

Is it art, or hardware? Or in fact, is hardware art? These are the questions whimsically posed by this show in the belly of the 5000-square-foot Crest Servistar Hardware store. Here Robin Hill's rope of briquettes snakes out of a hole in a Kingsford Charcoal bag and coils on the floor. William Craef's radiator knobs sprout from a cast-iron heating grate planted among the garden accessories. Laughing and screaming faces festoon Sally Minker's *Seeds of Discontent* packets, inspired by more conventional envelopes of zinnia and dahlia seeds.

The show of mostly local work, now in its fourth year, is organized by Williamsburg artist Gene Pool, known as the Can Man because he rides a unicycle wearing a suit made from 550 cans. Every year, Matt Freedman incorporates Crest's owner, Manny Franquinha, into his work. Last year's piece, *Manny's World*, a brightly painted plaster globe dotted with ethnic Mannys, still hangs from the ceiling. This year's *Sky Walker Manny* features our

hero poised jubilantly on the wing of a model airplane.

Near the lamps and extension cords, a small whitewashed cabinet by Tim Spelios emits scrambled TV signals. Trapped in a garbage can, Kate Yourke's electrically generated orange moth whirs excitedly. Caroline Cox's sculpture fashioned from pastel-colored shoe horns dangles from the ceiling like a mobile of huge molecules. As you stroll through Crest's five aisles, waiting for the 182 pieces of art shelved with the stock to reveal themselves, you are struck by how seamlessly these two categories mesh, and finally, how artlike the hardware is. Spend a few hours in these aisles, and one becomes all but indistinguishable from the other. Suspended from the ceiling, wire planters, circular saw blades, and hose reels tease the viewer. Nearby, a mandala constructed from 750 clothespins by Bill Schuck spins softly in the air.

—KAREN ANGEL