

"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

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Art in Review

Constraction

Deitch Projects
76 Grand Street, SoHo
Through Aug. 9

"Constraction," the title of this diverting group show organized by Kathy Grayson, conjoins the terms conceptual and abstraction. The overall experience, however, is more visually fizzy than intellectually challenging.

It starts with the floor, which Tauba Auerbach has covered in random order with two-inch, black-and-white ceramic tiles. It makes the gallery seem like a hip boutique, an impression furthered by Peter Coffin's contribution: a large "party disc" with translucent, primary-colored quadrants rotating just below a gallery skylight.

On the walls, Neo Op canvases by Ms. Auerbach have white surfaces covered by grids of black dots that produce the eye-buzzing illusion of partly crumpled paper.

Xylor Jane's dot paintings, according to a gallery press release, have to do with "her crazy calendars, journals and personal prime-number systems." Such quirky preoccupations are hard to discern, but those of her paintings with tiny, rainbow-hued dots in intricate grid patterns on black grounds have an electric glow.

Part painting, part low-relief sculpture, Ara Peterson's suavely decorative murals — one in black and white and one in candy colors — consist of wooden slats arranged in blocks of vertical stripes. The laser-cut slats project bumps and ridges, accentuating the optically gripping, syncopating rhythms of the whole.

Only two of the artists create works that are clearly conceptual. Mitzi Pederson's arrangement of four concrete blocks connected by lengths of ribbon put a sly, feminine twist on macho, old-school Minimalism. And Joe Bradley's seemingly Minimalist, monochrome brown paintings, with barely visible cartoon mouth lines inscribed in the paint, humorously comment on our tendency to anthropomorphize even the most abstract objects.

KEN JOHNSON