

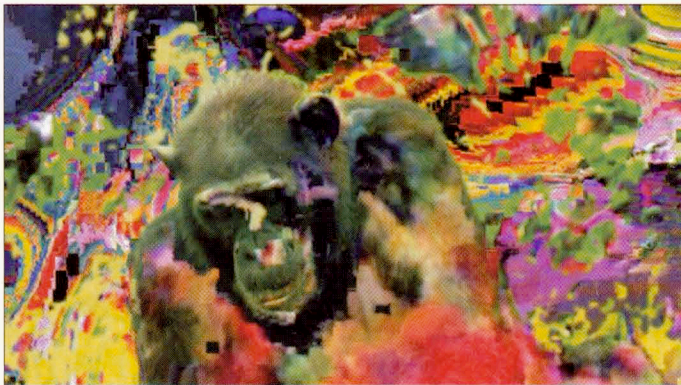


Pollack, Barbara. " 'Suddenly This Summer' Sikkema Jenkins & Co." **ARTnews**. Oct. 2009: 129-30.

'Suddenly This Summer'

Sikkema Jenkins & Co.

In a new format for summer group shows, the gallery presented videos by two different artists each week, one in its front and one in its back room, while a cheerful but tepid exhibition of sculp-



Takeshi Murata, *Escape Spirit VideoSlime*, 2007, still from digital video, 6 minutes, 30 seconds. Sikkema Jenkins & Co.

tures and works on paper by Shahzia Sikander, Nikki Lee, Vik Muniz, and Saint Clair Cemin, among others, remained on view throughout the run.

For the sixth and final rotation there were videos by Kara Walker and Takeshi

Murata. Walker took a decidedly low-tech approach to hers, a thoughtful and highly entertaining piece called *Kara Walker Messing Around with the Ebony Hillbillies* (2007).

Two African American musicians, one on fiddle and the other on banjo, play an old-time mountain music tune, stepping up the tempo as the action progresses. The video features Walker's idiosyncratic silhouettes, with cut-paper puppets performing menacing, sexually suggestive vignettes and casting eerie shadows on the wall.

In contrast, Murata's video, *Escape Spirit VideoSlime* (2007), is a psychedelic animation, more decorative than deep. In it, images of monkeys and gorillas morph into pixelated patterns that dissolve into a throbbing, brightly colored backdrop. While Walker's video is raw and disturbing, this one offers little more than a superficial sampling of the latest in digital-animation technology.

Of the nonvideo works in the show, a few were noteworthy, including Leonardo Drew's *Number 124* (2008), an intricate wall relief made of slats of distressed wood, and Arturo Herrera's *Come/SP* (2008), a buoyant triptych of painted, collaged paper. Walker's nuanced and delicately modeled series of eight untitled pencil drawings from 2005 complemented her video project. Janaina Tschäpe's watercolor *Slime Heaven* (2007) investigated the same stylistic territory as Murata's video animation, but with a lot more imagination and skill.

—Barbara Pollack