

The New York Times

"Laeh Glenn: Made in Space"

By Roberta Smith

August 1, 2013



Works by, from left, Marcia Hafif, Rebecca Morris, Hannah Greely and Eric Orr in "Made in Space" at Gavin Brown's. Courtesy the artists, Gavin Brown's enterprise, and Venus Over Manhattan

Venus Over Manhattan
980 Madison Avenue,
at 76th Street
Gavin Brown's Enterprise
620 Greenwich Street,
at Leroy Street, West Village
Both through Aug. 10

If much of the work in this sprawling, energetic two-gallery group show looks fresh and unfamiliar — and as if it might not come from New York — there's a reason. Everything on view was made in and around Los Angeles, fairly recently and often by artists who are either young,

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unknown in these parts or both. The show's title, "Made in Space," connotes the City of Angels, where, the thinking goes, studio space is cheaper and more plentiful and the general horizontal openness gives everyone more time and privacy to develop.

Certainly the work there often seems looser, brighter and generally more at ease with itself compared with what is found in New York. There's a greater tolerance for painting of all kinds, even full-on or diluted, and less of a mania for minimal austerity.

"Made in Space" was first seen in Los Angeles at Night Gallery, which is overseen by Mieke Marple and Davida Nemeroff, a young photographer-dealer formerly of New York whose large color close-ups of horses are represented here. The show is probably less a snapshot of the Los Angeles scene than of the ecumenical tastes of its organizers: Laura Owens, an established painter who decided against including her own work in the show, and Peter Harkawik, a younger sort-of painter who favors decals on clear vinyl at Gavin Brown (and who has his New York solo debut at Knowmoregames, a gallery in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn, through Aug. 30).

The younger set gets solid backup at both galleries from older artists like Rebecca Morris and David Korty (both especially impressive), Derek Boshier, Jim Isermann, Jorge Pardo, Allen Ruppersberg and Peter Shire, a well-known ceramist-sculptor and founding member of the design group Memphis, whose Memphis-y bench-sculpture brightens the entrance at Gavin Brown.

But it is mostly works by artists in their 30s with little or no New York exposure that steal the show. These include Laeh Glenn's small, quirky paintings; Patrick Jackson's handsome bucket-size ceramic cups; John Seal's stylistically varied paintings (as well as Aaron Wrinkle's); and a charcoal rubbing on canvas by Joshua Callaghan of a Ford Focus. The efforts of Vanessa Conte, Lucas Blalock, Gabrielle Ferrer, Josh Mannis and Max Maslansky also reward attention. Still, the show's surprises are not all from the young. Marcia Hafif, the New York abstract painter who now divides her time between the coasts, is the oldest artist here, and she weighs in with an anomalous work: a wall-size handwritten text about women, aging and sexuality that makes its presence felt.

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