

## ART IN REVIEW

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### 'Section 33'

*Dumbo Art Center  
45 York Street  
Brooklyn  
Through Sept. 19*

The 10-block area known as Dumbo (Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass) is said to be home to some 500 artists. This exhibition inaugurates the Dumbo Arts Center, a nonprofit institution comprising a raw but freshly painted exhibition space on the first floor and a performing arts space on the second floor of an old brick loft building.

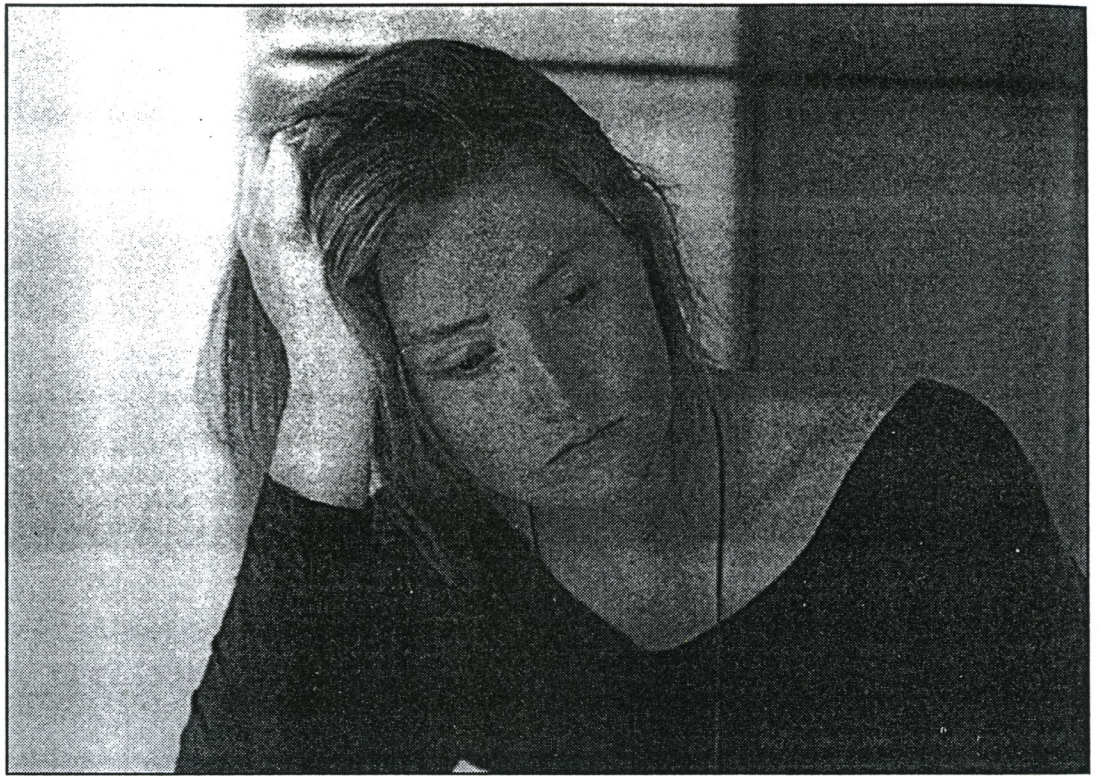
An uneven mix of good and mediocre works by 15 artists selected from the center's files, the show is less adventurous than you would expect of such a start-up enterprise.

Some of the most persuasive pieces are abstract with minimalist tendencies. Richard Bottwin neatly constructs compact plywood sculptures that inventively play with basic geometric relations; several painters concentrate on flatness and surface: Sonita Singwi makes white, ivory-smooth surfaces to which she sparingly adds tiny, evocative episodes of organic abstraction, and Heather Hutchinson coats sheets of Plexiglas with tinted beeswax, creating rectangles of foggy luminosity.

Formalism does not dominate completely, however. There are some sensitively painted urban-industrial landscapes by Nicholas Evans-Cato, and a couple of intriguing constructions by Emily Feinstein in which frosted glass panels reveal electrically backlit shadows of miniature furniture.

KEN JOHNSON

# PASSAGES OF LIGHT



## HEATHER HUTCHISON *Casts a Romantic Shadow*

NOHRA HAIME GALLERY

**B**urning with desire to capture a certain Romantic light, 31 year old Heather Hutchison has carved out some interesting turf, cutting across genres from painting to relief to sculpture. Beginning with a minimal tradition, Heather has progressed to a place within a grid system where light can be captured:

As Yves Klein is synonymous with a saturated blue, Hutchison has pursued a wispy, transcendent blue. By pouring wax onto panels of plexiglass, and mounting them on the wall, the work harkens back to Modern milestones like Donald Judd's boxes and Mark Rothko's ascending horizontal paintings. Further, there is a kinship with process-oriented work such as the poured lead pieces of Richard Serra. Although Hutchison paints the wax on, it is done so in a repetitive manner, up and down, sometimes creating a woven feeling.

In the newest pieces, Hutchison has stripped away some of the wax, creating nebulous negative space through which one can peer into the actual space of the box. This depth is important because it allows the light to come back out, creating subtle shifts in hue.

In looking for metaphors for her work, you might see clouds in a window. An oxymoronic aura surrounds these pieces as geometry and nature meld. The predominate right angles provide an armature for the wax and plexiglass, just as they provide an armature for the passage of light.

Although one can discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the work, it seems more intuitive than associative. The artist is

not enamored with "critical theory that's meant for literature and applied to art. Everyone has their own theory and philosophy. I didn't study art so I didn't have any of that training."

Instead she assisted the artist Joseph Amar, who used wax and lead. Another obvious influence was the work of the late Christopher Wilmarth. "He helped inform the work a lot in the beginning. All the elements he was using, the light that I'm always searching for, he had captured with the glass, steel and acid. He was from Sonoma County and at the time I was living in Marin County.

"Seeing his work was a huge influence. I would like to even go into those materials, but that would be too close for comfort. His color is coming directly from his materials. He's got the dark of the steel and the light of the edge. And when you're using transparent materials colors come from everywhere, which is an element of my work that his work has because of the transparency of the materials.

"Some of these new works came out of 19th century seascapes like Courbet and Corot, their compositions and divisions. Also the colors next to colors as in Giorgio Morandi. There is a Romantic inclination here. I'm not looking at biogenetics, not doing electro-shock on nature."

Subtle, seductive, and tempting to touch, there is a resonance and resilience in these works that is unique. The associative canon that wax has acquired over the ages whispers through these boxes, caressing, as it were, the light that comes through.

JEFF WRIGHT