

on the window through which we view evergreens and uninhabited nature. As constructions combining actual and artificially derived imagery, the videos show us a visual kaleidoscope that emphasizes the processing of what we see. In another group of works, wooden cuckoos open their mouths as if in song; the silent music results from a moving metronome strung to their beaks. Striking in their simplicity, these constructions are interesting for their introduction of movement into sculpture.

Consistently focused on how materials contribute to perception, James makes art that challenges our thinking. One of the most engaging pieces in the show was the construction made of salvaged windows and wood. *See-Through's* complicated, rotating structure occupied a space defined by two specially constructed, conjoined walls with two windows. The windows allowed viewers to see through to the space that housed the work's elements, giving a real sense of being inside and outside and the working relation between the two. Like much of James's work, *See-Through* offered a droll take on how we perceive three-dimensional space, its insights changing dramatically from the window of one wall to the next. Eschewing gimmicks for imagistic integrity, James makes sure that her projects exercise the viewer's intelligence, no matter how seemingly simple her concept or materials.

—Jonathan Goodman

NEW YORK

Elke Solomon

A.I.R. Gallery

A Tavola is a command and a call to arms, summoning us to the table and the concomitant onslaught of memory—personal, emotional, social, communal, graphic, and visceral—prompted by food. As it calls us to the table, it also warns us of the abundance awaiting to seduce



Elke Solomon, *A Tavola*, 2006. Mixed media, dimensions variable.

us to excess. Fittingly, Elke Solomon cooks and spends her summers in Italy, where she recently re-read Proust. Her “madeleine,” however, is a compacted art historical/pop culture cache. Closing the gap between art and life with wit and humor, her visual language appears so accessible that it may momentarily divert you from its layered complexity and sophistication.

Peering into the cluttered kitchen of Solomon's installation, one sees piles of cookbooks and magazines, both shelved and on the floor. Colanders and the like are heaped high, while plastic containers are so overfilled that their contents spill over. The tabletop is covered with clusters of objects that suggest a recipe in progress or a hastily eaten snack, a kind of contemporary *memento mori* complete with marshmallow Easter chicks.

By contrast, the chandeliers or wall sconces, composed of all matter of found objects and thrift-store specials, look strangely elegant. Amazingly,

these unlikely and mesmerizing light sources work. Just trying to identify the materials makes for a compelling guessing game, but engaging the shadows turns the fun into something more insubstantial and much darker. Thus a jumble of looped and tangled tiny black beads takes on a ghostly presence as it appears to dematerialize the very wall on which it hangs.

At its most basic level, eating both is and stands for consumption—essential to sustain life but easily abused. *A Tavola* celebrates and cautions against the excess. A plastic tablecloth hangs to the side, its floral design on a white, almost generic pattern marked with apparent wine stains. The quotidian traces of a recent gathering are visual counterparts to fading memories.

Everywhere you look in this rich installation, there are layers of two- and three-dimensional images and objects. A window frames and divides the iconic image of Grant Wood's *American Gothic*, while the sill below

holds an array of objects, including a plastic angel. The more you look, the more you see. The visual density is puzzling and delightful, as well as hilarious.

Why is that box of matzo lined with pink feathers? What is that plastic fish doing among rubber band balls and an assortment of legumes scattered on the rug? Of course, there are no answers, only questions, and the ongoing pleasure of looking. This is Solomon's first installation (she is known primarily as a painter and occasional performance artist), but surely it will not be the last.

—Harriet F. Senie

CINCINNATI

Alice Pixley Young Weston Art Gallery

Shape rules in Alice Pixley Young's work. She is also interested in color, atmosphere, and multi-disciplinary approaches, but her exhibition “Nightfall” kept viewers attuned to seeing what she would do next with her inventive use of recurrent shapes. A couple of temporary walls divided the show into three distinct installations. Young staked out the entryway, physically the largest space, with individual but connected works on each wall. This section benefited from being “read” from left to right.

Cloud Wall gave the surprise of black tar-paper clouds stitched in red, the thread running on to string delicate rice paper lanterns dangling across the space. Their straight-lined shapes contrasted with the cloud curves, both set off by paper cutouts in red and black that recalled snowflakes or, perhaps, the products of a child's scissors game. Directly ahead, a swoop of burnished steel birds, each a little larger than a man's hand, formed *Migration*. The birds, mounted to stand out from the wall, were set off by their shadows.

Young has said that her interest in Japanese fabric design springs from the early influence of her mother's quilt-making. In *Hexagon Wall*, the