The Sun

GALLERY-GOING

From Glitter To Grit

By STEPHEN MAINE

A compact, live-wire show now on view at Thrust Projects, on the Lower East Side, gathers one canvas apiece by eight painters, all women, who have developed a distinct approach to abstraction. The exhibition is curated by gallery regular Elizabeth Cooper. Contrary to the slightly hyperbolic press release, the work doesn't really "break through the boundaries of abstraction" so much as find an idiosyncratic place of its own within abstraction's extraordinarily diverse landscape. The best works in the show are tough, a bit nasty, and happen also to be the five largest.

FREEZE FRAME

Thrust Projects

Carrie Moyer contributes "Three Queens," in which networks of sinuous white lines play off slithering pools in yellow and a range of grays and greens. With its repertoire of vaguely anatomical shapes, the painting marries flat, frontal space with the suggestion of volume and its accompanying sculptural solidity. The addition of glitter only adds to the work's emotional resonance by contaminating its sleek, refined contours with a cheap and cheesy vernacular. Two totemic presences loom against a cool gray ground; is the third queen the space between?

Anatomical references appear also in Joyce Kim's achromatic painting, "The Samurai Lesson." Collaged shards of silver plastic suggest stick figures scampering across the dense gray ground, as if pursued by the thundering herd of choppy brushstrokes that dominates the frame. Ms. Kim's ultracasual approach to craft is slightly startling, particularly in contrast to Ms. Moyer's meticulousness.

Lisa Hamilton's "Butterknife" is built like a linebacker. Brawny, interlocking shapes are packed around a central vertical axis that is sensed rather than seen. The painting's otherwise wintry palette gets a boost from glazes of alizarin and earth green, and the pat of pale yellow at its core.

On the wall opposite, Wendy White checks in with "Block from Smack," in which the artist indulges her taste for compositional dissonance and extremes of surface. Based on a glowering chromatic triangulation of pink, green, and black, the painting marshals wispy spray paint, scruffy, diaphanous dry-brush effects, and a discordant impasto flourish. Ms. White is increasingly deft at integrating sculptural add-ons — in this case, a pint-sized soccer ball — so they feel crucial to the image.

Three smaller works by Jasmine Justice, Alisa Margolis, and [illegible] own canvas, "Untitled," a typically lively affair in which splotches and slatherings of cartoon color (plus a profound, anchoring green-black) whip themselves into a frenzy in an orange-yellow field. Here the artist devises a raucous cocktail of gestural abstraction, materials-oriented process art, and that quotidian, lowbrow pop visual culture that Claes Oldenburg once called "the blinking arts, lighting up the night."

Until February 17 (114 Bowery, between Hester and Grand streets, 212-431-4802).

THRUST PROJECTS

Elizabeth Cooper, 'Untitled' (2007).

Lisa Hamilton's 'Butterknife' is built like a linebacker. Brawny, interlocking shapes are packed around a central vertical axis that is sensed rather than seen.

Every Leaf on Every Tree

By JAMES GARDNER

There was once a time when people of an arty temperament spoke of "significant form." This term, coined in 1913 by the Bloomsbury critic Clive Bell, referred to the pure form and color of a painted, drawn, or sculpted object, as opposed to the actual object that the form signified: A black mass might depict a dog, but it was the abstracted size and shape of the black mass, rather than the fact that it depicted a dog, that was the significant form.

Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900), one of the foremost painters of the Hudson River [illegible]

FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH: Romantic Landscapes and Seascapes

Adelson Galleries

read Clive Bell, and that is just as well. For he represented the precise antithesis of all that Bell and the other modernists valued in the visual arts. A passionate positivist and, in an American context, an eminent Victorian, he wanted his landscapes of the Hudson River, the Mediterranean, the Amazon, and the North Pole to seem so religion as well — inspired by Ruskin, the Transcendentalists, and Baron Humboldt — was re-invented as a higher form of abstraction. Thus, works such as "Syrian Landscape" (1873) are infused with a divinity expressed through light and rocks and vast scenes of desolation, rather than through the robed figures that had once floated down the glassy rivers of Thomas Cole.

In time, a romantic element was re-introduced into Church's art. He loses nothing of his sharp, inexorable precision, but he redirects it along the paths of poetry. A good example of this is "[illegible]