

The New York Times

Art in Review

Meredyth Sparks

'Extraction'

*Elizabeth Dee Gallery
545 West 20th Street, Chelsea
Through April 17*

In the two years since her first solo show in New York, Meredyth Sparks has ventured forth from the sanctums of relatively austere photo-appropriation. She continues to combine collage and photo-montage, to use glitter and aluminum foil. But she has bulked up her efforts in every way. She now works on good-size canvases and even a folding screen, as well as on sheets of paper, piling on images and materials that evoke textiles, knitting, handwoven fabrics and sundry domestic activities and involve woodcut printing and an occasional allusion to Russian Suprematism. In addition, Ms. Sparks commissioned the artist Corrie Hogg to make door snakes of fabric stuffed with beans. They lie in wait in the second gallery.

The jagged, layered, generally abstract composition of these works can incorporate paisley fabric and pictures of paisley fabric, as well as windowpane Harris tweed. The aluminum foil is now smooth, crumpled or reproduced, while the glitter can be mixed in the paint or applied in thick furlike forms that resemble fabric cut like a dress pattern. Other pieces of fabric show signs of having patterns cut out of them. Similar shapes, cut from red, yellow and blue acetate (suggesting three-color reproduction), are layered onto wire hangers. Meanwhile a small projection on the screen reads "U can erase history," which cuts both ways: you can be eliminated from history, but you can also erase and rewrite it.

These works have a slightly generic abstract-collage resemblance that Ms. Sparks needs to reduce, although the evocation of Barry Le Va's large abstract drawings, whether deliberate or accidental, is refreshing. (At least it is better than the usual emphasis on his early running-into-walls performance pieces.) In general Ms. Sparks has increased the visual and tactile liveliness of her art, greatly intensifying the cross talk that has always been central to it.

ROBERTA SMITH



ELIZABETH DEE GALLERY

A digital scan, using aluminum foil and glitter, by Meredyth Sparks, on view in the "Extraction" exhibition at the Elizabeth Dee Gallery.