

Rob Pruitt

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Gavin Brown's Enterprise, through Oct 14 (see Soho)

Art



In his "101 Art Ideas You Can Do Yourself," an exhibition and book presented at Gavin Brown's Enterprise in 1999, Rob Pruitt spoofed the stern linguistic imperatives of Conceptual art by issuing a list of superbanal instructions. Take *Idea No. 28*: "Make a painting with make-up." By following some of his own guidelines, Pruitt transformed the gallery's austere white cube into

something more like a yard sale. The effect was both frivolous and clever.

In his current show, Pruitt turns an eye on the macho posturings of Abstract Expressionism. The abstract paintings are something of a surprise given Pruitt's usual penchant for Pop—one recent series featured modish depictions of Paris Hilton. Here, gestural splatters of fire-engine red and Pepto-Bismol pink—with a generous helping of Pruitt's signature glitter—gather on thin, crinkly, silver-foil grounds. It's as if Pollock and De Kooning had traded in their Long Island barns for Warhol's Factory and allowed their pathos-laden brushes to go a little bit swish.

In addition to the paintings, an odd parade of cement-filled blue jeans populates the gallery's floor. Striking poses that could have been pilfered from Esther Williams films or workout videos, they function as surrogates for action painters. Ironically titled *Esprit de Corps*, the truncated figures come across as lifeless. Like the paintings, the sculptures express a sexuality at odds with itself, somehow excited and dreary at once.—*Alex Kitnick*

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