

Smith, Roberta, "Art in Review; Little Odysseys", THE NEW YORK TIMES, 19 August 2005.

Consistency may or may not be the hobgoblin of little minds, but it can sink a thematic group show in at least two ways. One is literal-minded fidelity to the organizing idea; the other is unimaginative pursuit of familiar artistic modes. "Little Odysseys," which has been organized by the gallery's registrar, Nicelle Beauchene, around the notion of travel of a mostly aquatic nature, has both problems.

Nearly everything on view conforms to a current type, including lushly decorative paintings of colliding images (Rosson Crow's renderings of ships and ship interiors); reticent but meticulous drawings (Jeff Grant's images of drifting icebergs); or bravura replication with a macho aura (Michael Arcega's "Conquistadork," a small but functioning galleon made mostly of Manila folders and masking tape).

Hernan Bas, Ashley Snow Macomber and Michael Cline excel at varying but completely generic figurative styles. John Espinosa contributes an especially confused work called "Infinite Collapse," which consists of an aluminum polygon painted with a beautiful night sky and filled, according to the checklist, with 50 gallons of water from the Bermuda Triangle.

Shaun O'Dell's bristling drawings -- the best of which weaves together the saga of "Moby Dick" and the history of oil prices, and Charlie Callahan's "Foamdala," a nonchalant fountain made of the driftwood version of foam -- rise above the general level.

The ensemble rather painfully highlights the challenge facing any young artist, which might be put bluntly: if you're not after some sort of originality, get out of the kitchen.

Marianne Boesky Gallery 535 West 22nd Street, Chelsea Through Aug. 26