

# The New York Times

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 1996

By PHYLLIS BRAFF

## "Black & White"

Gallery Authentique, 1499 Old Northern Blvd., Roslyn. To Jan. 27. 484-7238.

Limiting the focus of a group exhibition is one way of allowing the most imaginative pieces to stand apart. The strategy serves this selection well, especially because some of the best pieces are conceptual works that benefit from the colorfree surroundings.

Perhaps the most memorable piece is Susan Kornblum's creative metaphor for the passage of time.

Her 24 plastic pages contain rows of paint dots that represent the 86,400 seconds in a day. Loosely attached at one corner to a multi-fold, flexible white form and to a black core, the sheets curve and spread in a semi-formal manner that takes maximum advantage of their transparency and of surface light reflections. Time, a universally understood concept, is experienced as abstraction and as design. Chris Coffin's wax construction, "Nor'Easter" is another use of translucent materials to comment on readily understood experiences. Dark shadow effects and pocked, scratchy marks conjure suggestions of atmospheric sensations that seem quite inventive and edgy when combined with the physicality of pliable paraffin.

A book-object by Sue Z. Smith sets up a potentially mesmerizing visual configuration by filling a triangular recessed cutout with tiny gleaming black coal chips. There is a similar feeling for the magic of various black materials in the graphite vessel shapes floating across the surface of Ms. Smith's engaging painting, "Soulships."

Frank Wimberley's constructions of raw, rough and irregular wood fragments provide the show's strongest three-dimensional impact. "White Hut" and "Minuet" come closest to the Cubist tradition of reas-

sembling fractured forms.

In general, however, Mr. Wimberley uses the character of each component, especially its quirky shape and its derelict, recycled quality, to create pieces that manage to be both casual and controlled. His most interesting examples strive to balance unsettling, unexpected elements with a sense of order.

There are painting highlights here too. Compressed energy from sweeping wide pigment strokes that cover occasional glimpses of pattern adds to the appeal of Christina Davis's untitled abstraction. A sense of tight schematics, on the other hand, is part of Marcia Widenor's concept for her small, quiltlike painting that incorporates configurations of archaic markings.

The optical strength of patterns is important in Gloria Cunnick's multimedia geometric arrangement and in David Slater's livelier, looser, very busy black and white ink drawing that seems to be a distillation of a fast-paced world of figures and autos.

Although abstraction easily dominates the show, Freya Carlbom's strangely assertive black painting of undefinable black vertical forms stands apart. Its shapes, which function like elements in a still life, are actually shades of gray-black.

An absence of any shelf or support gives no scale or anchor and allows the juglike units to seem monumental and to thrust themselves forward in a quietly disconcerting spatial dynamic. ■