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ART REVIEWS/Phyllis Braff

'Visual Ideas'

Nese Alpan Gallery, 1499 Old Northern Boulevard, Roslyn. To Feb. 19. (516) 484-7238.

A follow-up to the gallery's sharp, well-focused conceptual art presentation last season, this gathering of pieces by nine artists, subtitled "Conceptual Works II," is a generally polite and gentle affair, leaning toward pieces that give visual form to the way the mind works. Almost everything is both convincing and engaging.

Perhaps the most immediately accessible pieces are Chris Coffin's video, photographs and objects that explore storms and varying weather patterns. His large computer ink jet print, "Fragmented Felix," depicts a spiraling swirl of water and his turbulent video, "Floyd," captures a rhythmic but unpredictable crashing surf. Buried in the mesmerizing effect is an edgy concern: are viewers recalling accumulated experiences or are they losing an anchor to everything except the absorbing, powerful moment?

Keith Gamache's bold, schematic painting blending pavement squares and a telephone is one of the most subjective and rewarding works. It creates a parallel to instinctive childhood impulses to invent rules and make games from the most commonplace situations.

Included are works that involve language processing, and works that suggest accumulating, systematizing and transforming. Ray Neufield makes toughness seem delicate and beautiful in "Event Horizon," a wall sculpture made from tire scraps collected along the Long Island Expressway.

Andrew Ruhren's disparate construction, which includes a bellows funneling into a miniature log cabin set in a large, rough box holding amorphous glass panels, is the show's most assertive assemblage. It poses the challenging question, "What if anything could be an expressive material?" and leaves much for the viewer to resolve. ■