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david ebony's top ten

john monti at elizabeth harris



Dress Up
1997

Some of Chelsea's large exhibition spaces can seem like cold, cavernous airplane hangers. Too often, the art on view can barely fill them, let alone lend them any warmth. In this exhibition, John Monti, a sculptor from Portland, Oregon, manages to engage the entire space of the gallery using just a few simple forms and Minimalist arrangements.

All of the works in the show could be defined as sculptures, yet they cling to the walls and columns of the gallery as if they were striving toward the two-dimensional realm of painting. The show is dominated by *Dress Up*, a large piece in the gallery's main room. Made of plywood covered in gray fiberglass foam, the piece wraps around the gallery's central support column, gently sloping and flaring outward toward the walls like an enormous skirt. While neutral in color and subtly shaped, the piece dramatically transforms the space into a kind of playground, inviting viewers to participate in what might be called visual calisthenics.



Yellow Bob 11
1997

In the side room is *Yellow Bob 11*, a blobby form that looks like a large, misshapen M&M. Made of pigmented rubber over fiberglass foam, it juts out of the corner, softening the rigid geometry of the architecture. Works such as the bright red *Ruby Gel* can be seen as a cross between John McCracken and Jene Highstein. Ultimately, however, Monti's sense of light and space, seems more painterly than the work of either of those two sculptors.

John Monti at [Elizabeth Harris](#), 529 W 20th, NY NY 10011 (Dec. 6, 1997 - Jan. 24, 1998).