

FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2000

John Monti

Elizabeth Harris

529 West 20th Street, Chelsea

Through May 20

Most artworks leave something to be desired. Almost always there is some imbalance, something not fully realized. Often enough, though, an artist hits the sweet spot, achieving in his or her own terms, at least, something just right. You feel that in the buoyant new works of John Monti, a New York sculptor who has for about a decade and a half been working at the confluence of Minimalist, Pop and Surrealist streams.

Most of the works in this show are in a glossy, candy-colored circular form, like a spare-tire cover for a luxuriously customized car. In "Rondo: Orange," which measures two feet across, a bright, rust-colored spot is raised within a cranberry bowl, and a translucent gold rubber rim encircles the outer edge. The four-foot "Rondo Grande: Rose" has a lush red dome nested within a taxicab-yellow doughnut and a translucent pink rubber rim.

These vibrant, cheerfully absurd confections have a punchy, Minimalistic immediacy and a hedonistic materialism that one suspects Donald Judd would have liked. One thinks, too, of Kenneth Noland's target paintings; of California Finish Fetish, and of mock-corporate Pop Art. With their sexy, swelling volumes they suggest a kind of commodified eroticism. (They could be giant, neatly packaged condoms). And finally they have an iconic, hypnotic effect, like Tantric mandalas for the new millenium.

KEN JOHNSON