

The New York Times
nytimes.com

October 31, 2008

Art in Review

By THE NEW YORK TIMES

DONALD MOFFETT/YUICHI HIGASHIONNA
509 West 24th Street, Chelsea

Through Saturday and Nov. 8.

Donald Moffett's latest works fetishize the gestures of Lucio Fontana, Alberto Burri and other Arte Povera types who pierced, burned and sliced their canvases. The holes in Mr. Moffett's paintings are illusory black dots or neat openings ringed with embroidery; the slashes on his unprimed canvases are lined with zippers. The effect is a little punk, a little S & M, but Mr. Moffett's black, white and tan palette keeps the overall mood elegant and austere.

In another series of paintings Mr. Moffett creates shaggy, AstroTurf-like surfaces by clustering many tiny squirts of oil paint. These works also have holes, but here sexuality overrides formalism, in keeping with Mr. Moffett's previous bodies of work, in which abstraction sometimes serves as a subterfuge for wry expressions of gay identity.

In Boesky's project space an installation by the Japanese artist Yuichi Higashionna explores the aesthetic of fanshii, meaning odd or kitschy. It's a welcome departure from the kawaii, or cute, obsession of [Takashi Murakami](#) and his acolytes. Mr. Higashionna's faux wood-paneled wallpaper, plastic-rimmed heart-shaped mirrors and sculptures made from cheap circular light bulbs evoke 1970s Japanese interiors, proving that prosperity and good taste don't always go hand in hand. KAREN ROSENBERG