Material Matter
curated by Kat Griefen
September 8 – October 8, 2007
Opening Reception:
Saturday, September 8, 6-9pm

Alice Adams  Nancy Manter
Susan Bonfils  Rossana Martinez
Sharon Brant  Creighton Michael
James O. Clark  Ray Oglesby
Matthew Deleget  John Phillips
Rob van Erve  Lucio Pozzi
Gail Gregg  Leo Rabkin
Lynne Harlow  James Seawright
Phillis Ideal  Edward Shalala
Marthe Keller  Clover Vail
Stephen Maine  Don Voisine

Videos by Megan Biddle, Margarida Garcia and Sabrina Gschwandtner.

This exhibition is made possible through the generous support of The Golden Rule Foundation.

Folly No. 1
Performance by Rob List
Friday & Saturday,
September 14th & 15th, 7:30PM

A Shiny Night for Sleep: An Evening of Abstract Video Art
Saturday, September 22nd, 7:30pm
Co-curated by Kat Griefen and Meredith Drum
with work by Megan Biddle, Thomas Dexter, Margarida Garcia, Sabrina Gschwandtner, Zach Layton, Lucio Pozzi and LoVid.

Material Matter: The Currency of Abstraction
Sunday, October 7th, 3pm
Panel discussion with Lynne Harlow, Stephen Maine, Rossana Martinez and TBA. Moderated by Kat Griefen.

Sideshow
319 Bedford Ave. Williamsburg, Brooklyn 11211
fax/tel 718 486 8180  hours 12 to 6, Fri. thru Mon.
sideshowgallery@aol.com  www.sideshowgallery.com
L train to Bedford Avenue stop.
Located on Bedford Ave. between S. 2nd and S. 3rd.
**Material Matter**

Since 1936 American Abstract Artists has continued its commitment to what Stephen Westfall cites as a "tolerance of diversity" or a non-party line approach. The artists in Material Matter reaffirm this openness to difference, both in form and theory. Here, the organization’s legacy is manifested in the artists’ use of unlikely materials or use of traditional materials in unlikely ways. With their expansion into new spatial and theoretical planes the selection of works in Material Matter stretch, glow, expand, duplicate and even seemingly breathe.

Akin to Eve Hesse’s prescient “Hang Up” of 1966, Leo Rabkin’s “Ribbon with Two Points” takes the rectangular frame and playfully flaunts its conventions. Using the artist’s signature method of flocking, Rabkin’s work both threatens and seduces, like a red pigment of The Brothers Grimm’s creation. Marthe Keller expands on the painterly brush stroke through the layering and duplication of lines. By adding delicately sewn stitches over the process-associated packing tape and by stiffening run-away strands of canvas, “Stuttering Hand” and “Stiffy” beautifully freeze almost comic moments of the artist’s touch. Rob van Erve’s resin and fabric sculptures are the things of fantasy and flight. The lace of ladies collars, the trails of gowns and their balloon-like sleeves inspire his work. James O. Clark’s three-tiered installation consists of a humidifier, laser light and miniature pool of self-sustaining bubbles complete with skirts from which a gentle yet spooky glow is emitted. Clark combines elements that appear to reference the whimsical time of childhood and somehow also the ever-present protective parent.

Equally as compelling in the realm of abstract are those artists who employ more conventional materials and configurations but turn them on their heads. Rossana Martinez’s medium is color. By applying spray paint or acrylic directly on the wall while clad in the same shade of orange, Martinez breaks down the distinction between painter and painting. Similarly, Edward Shalala reverses the typical elements of a wall-hung work: blue and orange radiate through the canvas from the inside out. Since 1936 American Abstract Artists has continued its commitment to what Stephen Westfall cites as a "tolerance of diversity" or a non-party line approach. The artists in Material Matter reaffirm this openness to difference, both in form and theory. Here, the organization’s legacy is manifested in the artists’ use of unlikely materials or use of traditional materials in unlikely ways. With their expansion into new spatial and theoretical planes the selection of works in Material Matter stretch, glow, expand, duplicate and even seemingly breathe.

Material Matter also addresses the flawed yet common assumption that abstract art avoids political or social commentary. “Bad to Worse to Truly Terrible” speaks to this notion. The components of Matthew Deleget’s piece – gently curved circular canvases – suggest black holes, bullet holes or something else slightly sinister. In itself, each work holds a multiplicity of meanings. Some challenge an aspect of American culture that privileges the answer over the question. Some choose the means over the ends, some, becoming over being. Each work is literally or figuratively open ended, subscribing only to its internal logic and suggesting one important aspect of abstraction’s currency – its potential to counter-balance the dogmatic.

Kat Griefen

2007