

The New York Times

Art in Review

February 1, 2008

By Roberta Smith

Meiro Koizumi

Alex Hubbard

*Nicole Klagsbrun
526 West 26th Street, Chelsea
Through Feb. 16*

That art mediums come and go but aesthetic dualities never die is proved once more by the formalist-Expressionist opposition in the shows of Meiro Koizumi and Alex Hubbard, performance-based video artists. It is the New York debut for Mr. Koizumi, a Japanese artist who studied in Amsterdam and lived in London before recently relocating to Tokyo. Mr. Hubbard, a New York artist, is having an amusing if rather lackadaisical Chelsea debut following his first solo show, at Reena Spaulings on the Lower East Side in 2004.

Working with an overhead camera, Mr. Hubbard uses packing tape, paint in several forms, large sheets of plexiglass, and household implements and décor (a vase of flowers, Levolor window blinds, starfish) to either commit violent sculptural acts or create transient Color Field paintings while we watch. Illusions shatter, improvisation is parodied, beautiful effects are achieved in startling ways. The effect is colorful and amusing, especially in the painting video, which is especially funny when

you consider its title, "The Collapse of the Expanded Field I."

A short video by Mr. Koizumi — performed entirely with, and on, his face, and including slapping — stood out at the Nada Fair a couple of Art Basel Miamis ago. Now he has branched out, involving others in his antics, turning the silliest of situations into little meditations on the dark side of power relations. His videos are "Punk'd" for intellectual sadists.

In "Human Opera XXX" a man invited to talk about a personal tragedy is continually interrupted, given absurd stage directions and props, drawn on and finally drowned out by Mr. Koizumi. In "Art of Awakening" the camera focuses on the faces of young men as they lean forward awkwardly and poke what looks like a little bag of trash with a thin stick, while Mr. Koizumi gives orders, laughs or just watches, part puppeteer and part voyeur. Mr. Koizumi soils everything he touches, but in a good way. His merciless talent is apparent even in his unsettling paintings on magazine pages.

ROBERTA SMITH