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By Roberta Smith

PETER SCHUYFF

Nicole Klagsbrun
526 West 26th Street, Chelsea

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Peter Schuyff was born in the Netherlands in 1958, raised in Canada and came to New York in the early 1980s and proceeded to become a hot young artist of the Neo-Geo persuasion. He was known for a spare but seductive fusion of Op Art and Surrealism, in which thinly brushed abstract patterns acquired a smoky, trompe l'oeil tint. The shallow, shadowy results restated geometric abstraction as hip, hallucinatory wallpaper, placing Mr. Schuyff squarely between his contemporaries Philip Taaffe and Kenny Scharf.

A couple of years ago Mr. Schuyff moved back to Amsterdam, where he has become well known as a member of the band Woodward. This show, his first in New York in five years, twists the high-low, art-craft, abstract-illusion dualities of his work into something more contradictory and repellent.

These new efforts, his best in some time, are small found paintings to which Mr. Schuyff has made judicious additions, in the tradition of the Situationist Asger Jorn. The found works are not amateur thrift shop pieces, but professional knockoffs — usually signed — that rifle through art history, evoking or simply copying works by Boucher, Van Gogh, Vermeer and other Dutch masters, the Impressionists and so on. There are also pulpy-looking portraits, including one of a dog.

Each painting has value added: a bit of Schuyffian artifice in faded primaries, including concentric circles, biomorphic grids, rows of doughnutlike circles. The additions seem molded or at least palpable. They might be refrigerator magnets, hooked rugs or the afternoon Play-Doh project of an exceptional kindergartner. The portraits get masks that turn them into aliens, superheroes or ethnographic subjects of a colonized nation.

Mr. Schuyff's efforts extend the appropriation-art strategies of the 1980s, and are nasty but memorable pieces of work. Even nastier are a large group of often quite respectable 18th- and 19th-century drawings by forgotten artists to which Mr. Schuyff has added black and white motifs reminiscent of those of Dutch De Stijl. The question of whether these drawings have been resurrected or vandalized is pertinent, and adds a final twist to this rich, confounding show.