

## 'Minimal Pop'

Through May 14, Traywick

There's a fusion between pop and minimalism implied by the title of this handsome group show. The seven artists, heralding from each of the big art cities in the United States — San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago — provide an interesting snapshot of one vital, elegant, and slightly wacky strain of contemporary art. The artists take works that refer back to popular or high culture and recast those references in handsome, unlikely materials.

This isn't a new strategy, but it seems to be one that won't go away: artists continue to find new configurations, materials, and processes with which to engage it. And so we find Michelle Grabner's attractive plaidlike abstractions, in Easter pastel shades, made from Color Aid, the tinted paper used by architects and designers for mock-ups.

They're minimalist, pattern painting references reconfigured in crafty, designer terms. So are Amy Berk's two *Rothko Drawings*, which are geometric abstractions created with brightly colored, store-bought Post-it notes. The angularity of these contrasting squares reminded me a bit more of a Josef Albers color study, but they're visually appealing and conceptually swift. The use of materials available in office supply stores is something that recurs in this exhibition.

*White Walls*, for example, is James Carl's version of three tires made from black corrugated plastic — brand name: Coroplast. They have an industrial prototype quality, a hint of toyness, and a title that cleverly relates back to art. These pieces — along with Rebecca Morris's abstract blob painting, Karen Kimmel's interactive shadow-play sculpture, Joe Davidson's mini cityscape of hotel-size shampoo and deodorant bottles (cast in gray plastic), and Mia Lor Houlberg's color-soaked photo object lessons — are all good-looking works that just manage to steer clear of glibness. *Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., noon-5 p.m., 1316 10th St., Berk. (510) 527-1214. (Glen Helfand)*

WHITE WALLS (1998). BY JAMES CARL

