

The New York Times

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ROBERTA SMITH Art Review of Noah Sheldon's *Pink and Tan*

Gentle Textures in an Outpost Of Color and Quiet Ecstasy

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has some wonderful, carefully orchestrated chill-out spots — permanent little oases where you can sit, rest and muse without breaking the spell of art. The museum might consider adding another: “Pink and Tan,” Noah Sheldon’s solo exhibition at the D’Amelio Terras Gallery in Chelsea.

It’s simple. The Met acquires “Pink and Tan” lock, stock and barrel — or rather, player piano, wind chime and lighted pegboard — and makes it the heart of its 20th-century galleries. There it would function like a modern, slightly Dada version of the Ming Scholar’s Court in the Chinese galleries or the George Nakashima wood-paneled reading room in the Japanese galleries: something specific but meditative, about art but also atmosphere. As with the Ming court there is even a fountain.



Noah Sheldon’s installation “Pink and Tan” incorporates sound, sculpture (with a fountain) and photography

Mr. Sheldon, who first studied to be a composer, is skilled at separating beauty from the material world while reminding us that it is just about everywhere. He makes his quietly ecstatic art out of almost nothing, or, more accurately, several almost-nothings, carefully juxtaposed.

Here he starts by putting pink gels on the gallery’s fluorescent lights, unsettling your sense of intrinsic color. The side walls are lined with wan black-and-white photographs. On the left seven of these trace the path of a hazy sun over different nondescript landscapes.

Rugged hills and a barbed-wire fence give the soft images a harsh Western mien. They conclude with one large, grainy color image of a blazing yellow-and-red sunset that is nonetheless made of several superimposed scans.

On the right six similarly pale images zero in on dry grass tangled in abstract, calligraphic patterns. Three are close-ups, and three are closer still, as if to emphasize that there is always more to see. These images are flanked by relative brazenness: two large color images show the tips of peacock feathers, which combine gorgeous “eyes” with wafting grasslike strands.

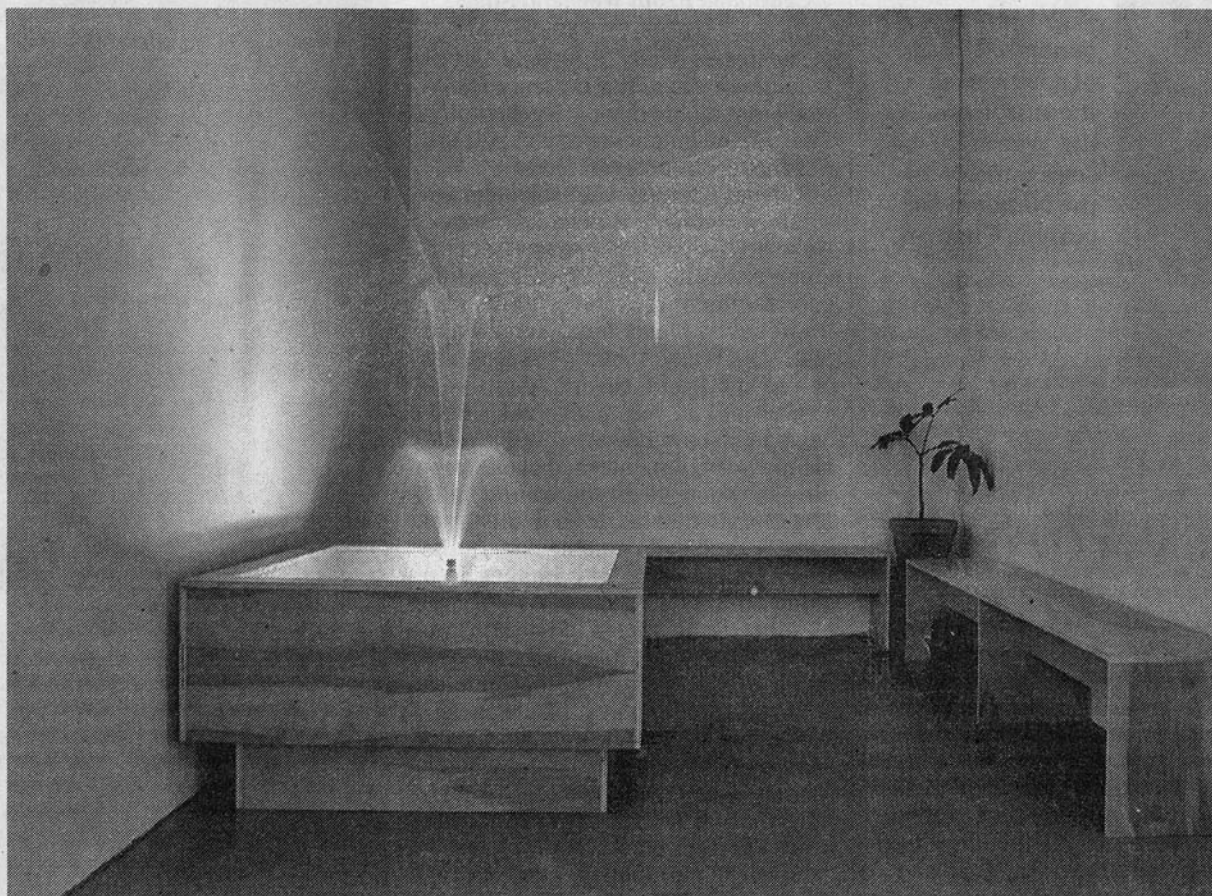
Nearby, the metal hemispheric fencepost caps of a wind chime tinkle incessantly, thanks to little mechanical tugs. Its falsetto counters the resonant bass of the old but complexly amplified player piano. It picks out a round of nine notes all timed to different intervals that form a wayward, time-lapse almost-melody. These sounds have a visual counterpart in a large sheet of pegboard bisecting the gallery; it is riddled with tiny Christmas-tree lights that glow and fade at different intervals. On one side you see mostly lights; on the other, green wires form a climbing vine.

The fountain adds gentle, burbling sounds to the mix. It is the most solid, overtly worked piece in the show, and it centers on a modeled cement cone, painted swimming-pool white, that might be a scholar’s rock reinterpreted in plaster by Giacometti. This sits in a plain plywood box whose stainless-steel interior and tinted fluorescents create near-rainbow effects. After a while, you may notice that the wind chime casts a chandelierlike shadow of pink orbs on the wall, while in the corner the light coming from the gallery’s offices is pale green.

As an ensemble Mr. Sheldon’s work sharpens the senses without seeming to demand much of them. It makes us aware of the way the world reverberates into art and art reverberates back, bouncing off everything in the immediate vicinity. One could imagine people at the Met leaving this oasis to explore the rest of the museum with stars in their eyes.

“Pink and Tan” continues through Saturday at D’Amelio Terras, 525 West 22nd Street, Chelsea; (212) 352-9400.

THE LISTINGS



Noah Sheldon/Southfirst: Art, Brooklyn

NOAH SHELDON: 'ALMOST VEGETARIAN' It's nice when art is exciting, but sometimes you just want to power down and relax, which is what this solo show, Noah Sheldon's first in New York City, lets you do. Mr. Sheldon, who is 29, studied composition at the New England Conservatory of Music before he studied art, so it's no surprise that the aural component of this charming show is important to creating a mellow mood, and creating that mood is the purpose of the work. To do so, Mr. Sheldon alters, enhances and invents realities in large and small — and always very simple — ways. He not only wants to transport us to someplace nice; he wants to make it extra nice. At the beginning of the show is a video he took of a forest in Venezuela, to which he's added digital fireflies that twinkle like a field of stars. To a nonblooming potted succulent plant in the gallery he's pasted plastic blossoms. The tinkle of wind chimes is always nice. No wind in the gallery, so he's made a simple little me-

chanical device that gives some hanging chimes a periodic jerk. To open all of this up a bit, he's installed a continuous slide show from his collection: pretty landscapes, distant horizons, dramatic clouds, interspersed with comfy hints of home life. Finally, as the pièce de résistance, he's installed a functioning fountain, made of plywood (above). There are benches to sit on, the lights are low, the music, Enya's "Oronoco Flow" — a traveling song — plays extra slowly. You can practically feel your pulse slow down. One of the things that's nice about all of this is that the work isn't stuck in self-conscious handmade-ness, managing to have objects without being about objects, or about installation either. It's smart enough not to try to look smart, which too often these days means cute. That's such a relief. (Southfirst, 60 North Sixth Street, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, (718) 599-4884, through March 27; free.)

HOLLAND COTTER



Culture Monster

ALL THE ARTS, ALL THE TIME

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Art review: Noah Sheldon at Cherry and Martin

November 27, 2009 | 12:25 pm

Nature is cataloged, chronicled and contained in five large color photographs and a 12-minute video by Brooklyn artist Noah Sheldon. The show is somewhat slight, but its subject is anything but.

At [Cherry and Martin](#), one photograph shows a moist, semi-tropical glade, through which a man-made wooden path zigzags. Elsewhere a tangle of trees dangles carefully numbered tags. In a third picture, a dense cascade of vines, hanging like a curtain across the foreground plane, is interrupted by a white pole from which hangs a fragment of yellow caution tape: Do not enter.



More is revealed in a more immediately obvious photograph, which shows an artificial lake against a fake stone cliff beneath a canopy of open-framework metal and glass. In this and the other photographs we are inside Biosphere 2 in the Arizona desert, a controversial imitation of the natural world fabricated for scientific study in an era of catastrophic natural degradation and potential collapse.

That precariousness is evoked in a movable structure of thin wooden slats wired together at the ends and standing in the center of the room. Made in collaboration with Maggie Peng, an architect who is Sheldon's wife, the sculpture is a rickety fragment of a geodesic form known for inherent tensile strength. (An associate of Buckminster Fuller, inventor of the geodesic dome, designed the Biosphere 2 container.) Where, the sculpture tacitly asks, is today's Bucky Fuller, captain of an endangered Spaceship Earth?

The video shows a lovely sunset glimpsed across a lake — "On Golden Pond," as it were — set to a soundtrack that is like a child's faltering piano lesson. Cyclical beauty collides with immature human dissonance, in a performance that ends in inevitable darkness. Fading to black, entropic decline and degeneration are rarely given such a romantic and effective glow.

— Christopher Knight

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Art

Time Out New York / Issue 653 : Apr 2–8, 2008

Dike Blair/Noah Sheldon

D'Amelio Terras, through **May 3, 2008**



Untitled (Katie)

Photograph: Courtesy D'Amelio Terras

While not overtly intended as a collaboration, this joint exhibition of Dike Blair and Noah Sheldon's works at D'Amelio Terras yields a nuanced spatial and visual experience that is more than just the sum of its parts. Blair's images of singular eyescans from his paintings over the last several years—are centered on white paper and framed in light wood; the pieces are spaced evenly and mounted nearly to the ceiling in columns of four. Occasionally there are two eyes in the frames, though rarely do they form pairs. The renderings are delicate and very, simply beautiful, and allude to peering through windows or a camera viewfinder.

Noah Sheldon's ordinary-yet-extraordinary snapshots, taken while on a road trip in Canada, are available for rifling in simple paper sleeves on a centrally located picnic bench. These images are at once banal—winter landscapes, hotel interiors—and yet dazzlingly gorgeous. The clarity in Sheldon's 4" x 6" prints allows for minute detail in the clear crest of a roiling wave or the slightly psychedelic texture of an industrial carpet. There is also a quality of airlessness reminiscent of De Chirico that heightens the immediacy of the images. The pairing of these artists conjures, both in the sets of floor-to-ceiling peepers and in the photos, the idea of looking as a double entendre, while also reaffirming the importance of the simple act of carefully observing—a revitalizing reminder indeed.

—T.J. Carlin

NEW YORKER

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

DIKE BLAIR / NOAH SHELDON

In Sheldon's début at the gallery last year, he turned the space into a chill-out chamber bathed in pink light. Here, he invites viewers to sit at a handsome wooden table and shuffle through photographs shot on a recent road trip through Canada. In themselves, the pictures—of melting snow, gray skies, and mundane interiors—are nothing special; but the experience of sitting quietly with strangers and touching the artist's images (without white cotton gloves) is. In Blair's prints, women's eyes gaze out from grids mounted on the surrounding walls. The marriage of works feels easy and unforced, a reminder that much contemporary art could do with a little relaxing. Through May 3. (D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-352-9460.)

DIKE BLAIR / NOAH SHELDON

D'AMELIO TERRAS, NEW YORK
22 MARCH – 3 MAY

D'Amelio Terras have shown some genius in pairing Dike Blair and Noah Sheldon for this not-quite-collaborative show. Blair has been exhibiting since the mid-1970s, and Sheldon has had only three solo shows since his 2003 debut, yet they are one in mood. Blair's installations have revealed a connoisseur of corporate interiors, of swatch pads and carpeting, and he has, of late, also been producing softly watery still lifes of modern objects. His dream exhibition venue, apparently, would be a meditation room at an airport. Sheldon, meanwhile, assembled a brilliant show of oddball serenity for Terras last year, a roseate oasis of sculptures and photographs that had *New York Times* critic Roberta Smith rightly imploring the Metropolitan Museum to purchase it *in toto*: 'it would function like a modern, slightly Dada version of the Ming Scholar's Court in the Chinese galleries', she wrote. So this ought to be a heavenly match.

Blair set to work on his contribution last year, and following a strategy of reproduction he has employed before, he's covered the walls with an untitled series of framed, ink-jet-printed copies of eyes depicted in his paintings. A generous white backdrop cushions the lifesize images, which capture the eye and its locale – eyebrows, some nose, the changing contours of the skin – with a keen sensitivity to all its hues. Some images are paired in the same frame, others stand alone, but none line up with their true neighbour. The models for the original paintings were all close acquaintances – the artist's wife, friends or former students – and although at first glance the impression is that of a wall of cameras, the ultimate edect is more like that of being eyed up from the end of the bar by a million flirts.

Blair's is a gentle but insistent gesture, and the perfect kind of ordering that, in Sheldon's shoes, you might want to be handed in this game of Exquisite Corpse. Sheldon has responded with *The Idea of North* (2008): he dashed to Canada, snapped a mood study of his journey and has poured out the results in the form of 10 x 15 cm photographs, 480 of them, displayed for viewers to sort through on a white oak table. There's snow – lots of it – as well as ice skaters, seagulls, fungus, rainbows, pines, motels and a lonely red windsock. They're images that are sharply focused on their object, and chilly in contrast to the surprisingly warm gaze of Blair's onlookers. Yet despite their multiplicity of viewpoints, they order what is essentially the story of a single eye journeying through the wild. More disappointingly, they order up a conventional narrative: 'artistic', predictably poetic.

Blair, writing in the show's press release, says that Noah was still racing around Canada just eight days before the show opened. 'Noah is often best when flying by the seat of his pants', he writes. I'm afraid I'd disagree. *Morgan Falconer*



Dike Blair, *Untitled (Nadia)*, 2007,
archival inkjet on 100% cotton
rag, 36 x 46 cm, edition of 10 + 2AP.
Courtesy the artist and D'Amelio
Terras, New York

From ARTFORUM,
Critics Pick - June 2006

"MYSTIC RIVER"

Stephen Shore's 1979 photograph Merced River inspires "Mystic River," an exhibition of works attentive to the everyday and the American landscape. Noah Sheldon, who curated the show, presents Merced River (adapted from Stephen Shore), 2006, which serves as a starting point. A small monitor displays a video literally made of fragments of Shore's picture of Yosemite National Park: Panning over the initial image, the camera inspects detail after detail, outlining a unique territory made of hundreds of distinct images. This analytic approach turns the original landscape into a series of microcosms in which humanity and nature find a trembling and strangely mysterious balance. A similar atmosphere suffuses other works, such as Ian Hundley's South River, 2006, a fabric quilted into a flood of abstract waves, and the S shape of Martha Friedman's Rope, 2003, made from a thick mooring cord set atop a sinuous glass stand. Functioning on a more abstract level, other pieces stand out, like two little cutouts by Matt Keegan, and Paul Wagner's old-fashioned drawings depicting haircuts. The work that best summarizes the inspirational tone is Heather Rowe's If the Sun Never Set, 2006, a large-scale sculpture made out of industrially produced modular materials, such as two-by-fours. Standing like a precarious threshold or the raw skeleton of an existing wall, Rowe's piece is a membrane that conflates inside and outside, through which the viewer can pass. The sculpture's interstitial spaces are embellished with mirror fragments that craft a bewitching labyrinth of sight lines and vanishing points. Rowe also adds a round lamp that hovers nearby, an everlasting sun illuminating this desolate constellation.

SOUTHFIRST, 60 North 6th Street, May 05–June 11

—Cecilia Alemani

ARTFORUM

NOVEMBER 2007

REVIEWS

PHILADELPHIA

"Ensemble"

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

"Ensemble" was a musical composition in the guise of an exhibition and was best experienced first with one's eyes closed. This asked something rather unusual of the viewer, demanding that he or she stand in the middle of the gallery, forget about contemplating individual works, resist for a moment the urge to manipulate them, and give in to pure sound. Why? Because the twenty-seven contraptions assembled by curator Christian Marclay at the Philadelphia ICA were not mute objects but sound-making devices, either mechanically driven or manually activated.

Think of "Ensemble" as an ongoing interactive performance with at least three possible variations. The first of these involved listening to the show alone, concentrating on the output of those machines that need no human presence to activate them, such as the tinkling of Angela White's *three turntables and michael Jackson*, 2007, the unexpected thump of Noah Sheldon's *Perpetual Chimes and Shells*, 2006, the Uzi-like rat-tat-tat of Terry Adkins's *Off Minor*, 2004, and the intermittent drumming of David Ellis's *Trash Talk*, 2007. The second variation was best performed by a small group of people, each of whom added to the previous version by "playing" the thirteen works that require audience participation. The resultant whirs (Yoshi Wada, *The Alarming Trash Cans*, 1987), clickety-clacks (Martin Kersel, *Creakers*, 2007), ding-dongs (Jim Hodges, *the bells/black*, 2007), and whooshes (Nina Katchadourian, *The Picture Book of Sexual Love*, 2007) transformed what was a small chamber piece into a symphony whose volume and rhythm were collectively determined. In the third variation, the arrival of a larger crowd gave rise to a more unruly cacophony.

Marclay's curatorial baton extracted the best from his performers. In the context of "Ensemble," works of minimal visual interest, such as Martin Creed's trio of metronomes, Pierre Huyghe's wind chimes, and Angela Bulloch's tuning fork, suddenly acquired a new lease on life. It was a great pleasure to see the ICA's usually withdrawn spectators and guards morph into boisterous musicians, moving purposefully in and out of sync with each other. The prospect of hearing Alison Knowles, Alan Licht, Marina Rosenfeld, and others perform in the show as part of a concurrent live-art series became ever more intriguing.

Seemingly in response to the current glut of artist-curators, Marclay has invented a new job description for himself: the composer-curator. The careful attention Marclay devoted to individual sounds, to the intervals between them, to their volume, sonority, rhythm, and locations

in the gallery, and to how all these variables might be affected by an active audience, ensured that "Ensemble" as a performance piece never got stale. But it would be a mistake to say that Marclay simply adapts the arts of the DJ to the task of the curator. Significantly, Marclay avoids amplification and prerecorded material. With the exception of works by John M. Armleder, Carolee Schneemann, and Jon Kessler, everything included in "Ensemble" is low-tech, acoustic, self-contained. Here the curator is a percussionist, but one who cedes control over his instruments, at least partially, to the viewer.

—Paul Galvez



View of "Ensemble," 2007. Foreground: Jim Hodges, *the bells/black*, 2007. Background: Mineko Grimmer, *Bamboo Forest*, 1995/2007.

Lupo, Nancy. "Noah Sheldon in the Sun," *Artslant.com*, June 16, 2008.

ARTslant

Noah Sheldon in the Sun

Noah Sheldon

Cherry and Martin

12611 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90066-3703

May 31, 2008 - July 5, 2008

There are some works of art that seem to uncannily capture what it is to live, work or simply spend time here in Southern California. I am thinking about the *Beach Boys's Pet Sounds*, Joan Didion's early essays especially from *The White Album* and *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*, and many of Stephen Shore's photographs of California's diners and gas stations. Maybe it is just that the June sunshine is perfect in California, but walking into Noah Shelton's exhibition at Cherry and Martin in Santa Monica made me feel that his works certainly embody something of this world - a world steeped in obliterating sunshine and sporting that notorious, laid-back attitude.



Noah Sheldon
Untitled (Making Grey), 2008
C-print, framed
24 x 20 inches

Courtesy of Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles

As you enter the space you are immediately met by a large, motorized wind chime (Fence Post Wind Chimes) that Sheldon constructed out of some four dozen steel fence post caps that are suspended from a black plywood disk, which is connected to a disco ball motor. The motion of the motor creates a surprisingly bold and melodic chiming. Hanging on the wall in the gallery are two framed C-prints, both titled *Untitled (Making Grey)* and having an overall magenta cast to them. On your way to the back gallery, there is an untitled series of 5 head shot-sized photographs of a beautiful woman. In the first, she has no makeup. Then, progressively, she has more makeup until the final photograph where she is again shown with no makeup. The series is apparently part of a much larger film project that is still in the works.

In the back gallery there is a single sculpture, *Glass Fountain*, in which three LED candles are set atop small river stones. Water runs between the candles creating a nice, kitschy sound of moving water. The fountain is housed inside of a black glass box that has been treated with a two-way mirror. One can see through it from the outside, but when looking from the inside, one can only see the fountain reflected. This truly strange object might be the perfect crystal ball for some unknowing wizard somewhere in a Century City office tower.

Posted by Nancy Lupo on 6/16



Candle Fountain, 2006-2008
Glass, plastic, wood, rocks, LED's
15 x 9 x 9 inches

Courtesy of Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles
Photo Credit Robert Wedemeyer



The Nature of Noah Sheldon's Art

By Rohin Guha

July 03, 2008

Noah Sheldon's fare isn't the stuff that galleries are typically made of. His current exhibition, on display at LA's Cherry and Martin, creates microcosmic environments, inviting guests to make the most of the atmosphere and leave only when they feel ready. It's Sheldon's homage to a life soaked in sunshine and beachside lounging.

Fashioned out of steel, wood, and construction materials, Sheldon's wind chime is massive. To compensate for the lack of swift breezes circulating throughout Cherry and Martin, this particular piece is replete with a motor a disco ball motor, in fact—that occasionally fusses with the strings, causing the chimes to clink and clank against each other. This grand contraption and its melodious soundtrack greet you in the front gallery.

In the back gallery of Cherry and Martin, there's the Glass Fountain, perhaps a nod to the elusive nature of tranquility. Three LED candles rest atop some river stones and water runs between the stones. The entire display is encased in dark plastic, providing no clear view of the piece, and the only opening provides reflections of the fountain from various angles. And much like any sensible beachside vacation, Sheldon's exhibition also wraps on July 5, giving patriots just enough time to sneak in a visit before rushing home to grill their veggie dogs, or deep fry their croquettes.

From PAPER MAGAZINE:

June 2005

"THE MOST SPLENDID APOCALYPSE"

If the world insists on barreling straight to hell, it ought to look good while doing so. Such is the gloomy idea underpinning "The Most Splendid Apocalypse," an exhibition organized by the precocious young curator and critic Jason Murison, who has assembled a choice crew of 20 established and emerging artists, including Matthew Brannon, Noah Sheldon, Mala Iqbal and Amy Wilson. These artists explore three depressing but burningly important issues for our postmillennial world: conspiracy theory, right-wing ideology and apocalyptic visions.

P.P.O.W., 555 W. 25th St., (212) 647-1044. Through Jul. 30.

—SARAH VALDEZ



BROOKLYN RAIL

Critical perspectives on arts, politics, and culture

MARCH 2005

Noah Sheldon *Almost Vegetarian* Southfirst Gallery

“Plywood Fountain,” an artwork with a perfectly descriptive title, occupies one room of *Almost Vegetarian*, Noah Sheldon’s first solo show at Southfirst Gallery in Williamsburg. “Plywood Fountain” is an unadorned four-by-four-foot polyurethaned birch box fitted with an electric pump emitting a jet of water, which takes on an iridescent sheen from three colored lights submerged in its basin. It refers less to the illustrious fountains in the history of conceptual art—think Duchamp and Nauman—than it does to the more ornate waterworks installed in various Thai and Korean eateries around Bedford Avenue. The sound of the water is augmented by “On the Banks of the Orinoco,” an audio work that reprocesses Enya’s 1988 new-age crossover hit “Orinoco Flow” into a murmur of muted chords. The two pieces taken together allude to a fictional trip to the Orinoco River in Venezuela, and they spell out the issues Sheldon is dealing with here: travel, aesthetics, and spirituality, all refracted through quotidian forms and suspect cultural expressions.

The sculptures are presented along with several photographic works: two large color prints of a ficus plant and an arrangement of artificial peonies, respectively, and a slide show. The prints are the same size and format and play with minute differences in presentation. “Ficus” shows a real plant in a slightly scruffy hallway, which could be anywhere. “Peonies” is a silk plant in a ceramic vase depicted frontally, with minimal indication of setting, in the manner of a commercial photograph. It is like a catalogue shot raised to an exalted level of perfection. Attributes of the two pictures seem to combine magically in “Grafted Sakura,” a real stick-plant on a pedestal to which small artificial red flowers have been attached.

The slide show is projected low on the wall and shows a loop of 160 travel photographs taken on trips to Malaysia, Taiwan, Sweden, Los Angeles, and other exotic locales. The pictures range from austere, classically composed landscapes to more candid portraits of friends, pets, and travel acquaintances. Sheldon, who also works as a commercial photographer, possesses a facility for setting up beautiful shots of trees, water, and flowers and seems incapable of taking an ugly picture. He lets the slides get really pretty, but he also knows when to stop the flow of lush imagery with an arresting and unexpected choice, like the picture of a half-eaten crab carcass on a paper placemat in a seafood restaurant that punctuates one particularly pastoral sequence of landscape shots.

The viewer’s experience of the show is enhanced by the sound of “Perpetual Wind Chimes,” which consists of a circular wooden ramp mounted on a turntable that revolves and bumps an aluminum pole, which in turn jostles a string attached to two sets of simple chimes mounted near the ceiling on opposite walls of the gallery. This creates a punctual burst of sound every minute or so. The effect is comically startling, a meditative disruption. Like “Grafted Sakura,” the chimes are about the production, at will, of the kind of revelatory experience that is supposed to happen only through chance or divinity.

The bottom line seems to be that in art, beauty and spirituality are always going to be in negotiation with commerce and embarrassing, terrible corniness. Anyone wanting to take a beautiful picture of an exotic landscape has to make some truce with the existence of travel brochures and naïve photojournalism. Anyone who wants to talk about meditative experience must face, unflinchingly, the reality of Enya. The works in this show slip between documentary realism and transparent fiction and, in a different register, between the conventionally beautiful and the antiaesthetic. The point isn’t rhetorical but pragmatic: Sheldon embraces whatever materials are available and uses them to achieve a functional practice of being in the world and making art. The title of the show, *Almost Vegetarian*, describes such a position: aspiring to a form of purity, but living with contradictions.

—Roger White