

CHICAGO

ARTURO HERRERA
RANDOLPH STREET

In a delectably shifty site-specific installation titled *Tale*, Arturo Herrera offered a quietly spectacular version of his severely minimal investigations of the interstices between graphic form, three-dimensional presence, and temporal experience. In a large cubical project space, he painted one large white wall with a continuous, but varied torrent of orange blobs, goops, bulges, protuberances, billowings, and plops.

The quasi-abstract curvilinear shapes rolled into one another, sometimes bobbing gingerly along the negative white space, yearning to approach the elegance of a parabolic, geometric certainty. Then off they went, like bulbous intestines prancing into chaos, the forms skewed like cartoon figures racing to a cartoon precipice. The brightly lit wall seemed to dominate the staid confines of the gallery space with its shimmering, sunny, citrus-like disposition — the chosen paint was a commercial color titled "Orange Peel." But the giddy pleasure of losing oneself in the prettiness of Herrera's expansive eye-popsicle was hedged, and almost obliterated, by two little unassuming sculptural things that sat on the floor, sidling up to the wall. Quiet objects of painted white wood, describing small areas, sat obdurately like miniature Sol LeWitts, jettisoning the viewer back into the architectural space, with its windows, columns, doors, and other annoying protuberances. This seemingly off-hand inclusion of 3-D elements — now a Herrera signature — effectively located the installation within the post-minimal heritage of artists who conscientiously insist that the viewer feel their position in space along with the experience of the art.

Happily, Herrera overrides the desultory demands of post-minimalism by allowing for free play. Those orange undulations are admittedly adapted from mass-cultural images taken from cartoons, children's coloring books, and advertisements, all viscerally familiar to the late twentieth-century intellectual voyeur. The shapes, like innocent clouds or blatantly pointed symbols, appear to be Mickey Mouse, or dad's penis, or a voluptuous breast, or Snow White's dwarves, or mom's spleen, or my own personal Bambi. By stringing these hilarious yet creepy 2-D shapes together, taunted by the "pure" intelligence of the little 3-D, floor-bound things, Herrera effectively gives us a chance to be coolly engaged, though with a lickedy-split, hot, yet always frustrated, sexuality.

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