

Flash Art

R E V I E W S

JUSTIN LOWE

OLIVER KAMM/5BE GALLERY

For his first solo show, Justin Lowe stayed true to his media of predilection: vast piles of used clothes and room-size installations. In “Helter Swelter,” sweaters, T-shirts and whatever textile can be found in a by-the-pound second hand store covered the back room of Oliver Kamm’s gallery in a vast array of spiral patterns. The carcass of an eviscerated ice cream truck was propped on top of stacks of sweaters, its inside transformed into a wheat-pasted scaffold and refuge to two stuffed coyotes contemplating the title page of a paperback book on bliss quotient. A loud rhythmic soundtrack resonated throughout into which was woven the infamous Mr. Softee jingle designed to trigger Pavlovian reflexes in New York City’s children and adults alike.

Out front, Lowe created the perfect rendition of a New York City bodega — those street corner Latino delis stocked with stale industrial pastries, toxic colored “fruit” drinks, sticky bags of fried pork rind as well as a vast array of incongruous items such as one-pound bags of rubber bands, condoms and feather dusters.

Lowe’s exercise in hyperrealism created amusing inversions of exterior and interior, from the quaint and hardly novel twist of plucking a structure from the “real world” and plopping it inside a gallery, to the contradictory presence of scaffolding on the inside of a truck, and finally, the transformation of the truck’s exterior into a psychedelic inner realm. But beyond that, the relationship between the pieces seemed oddly disjointed, as if they were the end result of an intense brainstorming session but Lowe had not had the time to finesse their relationship to one another and make them work as a whole.

Isabelle Dupuis



JUSTIN LOWE, view of the exhibition “Helter Swelter” at Oliver Kamm/5BE Gallery, New York, 2006.