

Time Out New York

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ART

Reviews

"Parsing the Line"

The Work Space, through May 11
(see Soho & Tribeca).

This group exhibition features work by artists who transcribe texts—often long and weighty ones—in some pretty acrobatic ways. Here, words—curled in circles, crocheted into strips or hung from the ceiling—are loosened from their usual linear context, as if the artists wanted to see whether any additional meaning might drip out.

The result is that these lines aren't "parsed" so much as they are subsumed into the visual language of the art. Cyrilla Mozenter scatters snippets of Gertrude Stein over a huge, double-layered piece of handmade paper, which is also sprinkled with glued-on buttons, and sutured here and there with pieces of thread. Mozenter puts Stein's obtuse style to good use: You sense that whatever meaning lurks within the writer's words has been sewn up and embedded somewhere beneath the surface.

Sometimes you can make out a text in its entirety; most often, you can't. Lucia Warck-Meister copies who-knows-what by Jorge Luis Borges in weblike strands of melted plastic that hang from the ceiling like a hammock. Although they are illegible, the sentences still have presence, looking limp and tired, as if they had to rest from their own weightiness. You can also forget about following the words of Arthur Danto, which Seong Chun typed onto tiny strips of paper which



Lucia Warck-Meister, *Weightless Soul*, 2000.

were then crocheted into chains and wound around little nails. And there's something profound about Cheryl Sorg's wall sculpture. She has taken Melville's *Moby Dick* in its entirety, snipped it into pieces and—with the help of a mother lode of Scotch tape—arranged it in a giant spiral. As you follow Melville's prose from the center of the spiral outward, the words seem almost magnetic, especially when describing the inexorable call of the sea. But riveting as it is, I had to stop reading out of sheer fatigue (Sorg's piece is 11 feet across). The poetry lingered, however, and I was content to just step away. Even when you can't follow all the words, they have a way of washing over you.—Sarah Schmerler