

The New York Times

June 27, 2008

Art in Review

ALISON KNOWLES

Sequence: One Work, One Week

Miguel Abreu Gallery

36 Orchard Street, Lower East Side

Through Sunday

The summer plan at the Miguel Abreu Gallery was to involve 10 artists, each invited to show a single work for one week; then the work would be re-installed in the gallery's lower level as part of an expanding group show. But in the fourth week the poet and veteran Fluxus artist Alison Knowles arrived and hung nearly 20 ethereal recent efforts made from small found objects and natural materials. Several consisting of double layers of handmade paper tinted with indigo, flax or oat are titled "A Rake's Progress" in honor of the rusted claw of a garden rake (also present) used to scrape their surfaces, exposing the contrasting tones of paper. Other works, all titled "Event Thread," are flax-dipped cords strung with rusted screen-door hooks and faded bits of detritus; they are butterfly rebuses.

One standout assemblage features a stiffened T-shirt cut open, flecked with pink lentils and decorated with what seem to be frilly clumps of wrung-out paper pulp at the neck. It looks like a relic of another time, whether Elizabethan or Egyptian. Ophelia might have worn it.

Fittingly, two cyanotype-silkscreen works simply offer the ghostly imprints of things: kitchen utensils, beans and pick-up-stick batches of raw pasta. Leaning in a corner, one of the pieces Ms. Knowles titles "Bean Turner" represents her more audible, performance-based work: as the checklist puts it, it consists of a drum made of "flax-paper surface in barley and beans containing azuki beans" and may be shaken. How this

will play out downstairs is anyone's guess, but for the moment, this is an exceptionally knowing and beautiful show. ROBERTA SMITH