

David Row: *Kangra*, 1996, oil and alkyd on linen, 24 by 30 inches; at André Emmerich.

the beautiful sparseness of *Stone III* (1995), one can see Kim addressing his origins: the barely discernible calligraphic markings, drawn over a large field whose subtle tones move from near white to gray to black, feel like the ghostly remains of a classical landscape. The work's luminous gray background, divided by four slender vertical white lines, can be likened to an empty space; indeed, Kim sees *Stone III*'s ground as a metaphor for the mind. The artist maintains a strong interest in Zen thought, and his method of working, which is unusually swift, duplicates the spontaneity often seen in Zen art, in which the image or mark is

a kind of living organism, Randy Wray's works are weird hybrids. Like creatures in a sci-fi horror movie, Wray's canvases, which incorporate figurative imagery and abstract patterning, are liable to sprout uncanny fissures and protuberances. This show of 36 20-by-16-inch paintings and three larger canvases (roughly 6 by 5 feet), all 1996 and all untitled, was a good introduction to a Brooklyn-based artist who has shown at White Columns and Camargo Vilaça in São Paulo, Brazil.

In one of the smaller works, an all-over blue and white check-board pattern subjected to a slight optical distortion forms the

David Row at André Emmerich

David Row's paintings are abstractions

that contain hints of realism, and hand-made works that make use of the machine. They are constructed using screenprinting and templates, but any machinelike precision is undermined by the artist's smearing of the resulting shapes.

Row's cast of characters includes ovals shapes of varying thickness-

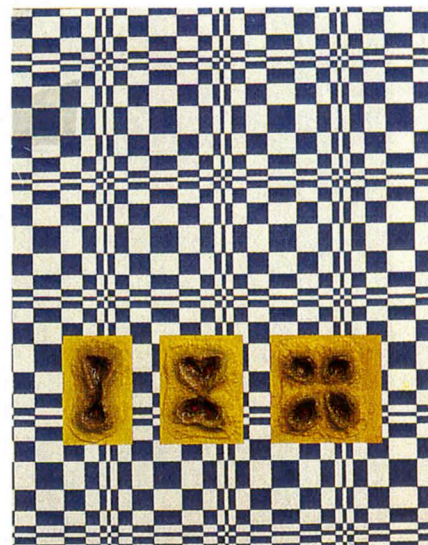
es; slender, irregular loops that recall the genetic material in cell division; spiraling helixes resembling DNA; and vague black-and-white forms resembling X rays. The scientific vocabulary seems appropriate here, for though the works are generally large, the imagery is curiously cramped, like a specimen on a microscope slide.

Row favors a standard compositional technique which involves sandwiching a dark, X-ray-like visual unit between two brighter ones. Such a visual reading, however, is contradicted by the physical reality of two unequal panels. *Radha Dallies*, for example, which appears to be a triptych, is actually a diptych, with the center motif being unequally divided between the left and right sides. This setting up a format and then subverting it increases the impression

Row's paintings give of energy straining to break free from tremendous compression.

The compositions are also enlivened by Row's carrying over of a form, most often a helix or oval, from one part to another. Some ovals are rendered in red or orange paint that stops just short of being fluorescent against yellow. These may continue as an undercurrent in the black-and-white middle section and then reappear in different colors on the right. But all of the colors are built up, layer upon layer, and underlying pigments often bleed through. Their visibility at the edges where panels meet helps to signal the actual structure of the painting.

These are handsome works that bespeak intelligent planning and a willingness to temper simplicity of concept with complexity of execution. —Reagan Upshaw



Randy Wray: *Untitled (meiosis)*, 1996, acrylic and mixed mediums on linen, 20 by 16 inches; at Kagan & Martos.

background for a trio of yellow rectangles. Out of the rectangles erupt three-dimensional elements that look like mutant organs or open sores. (They reminded me a little of the strange cavities in the head of the human/animal star of Matthew Barney's *Cremaster 4*.) The subtitle, "meiosis," helps identify the 1- 2- and 4-part relief forms as dividing cells, but doesn't succeed in lifting the queasiness they instill.

In two other small canvases, subtitled "faith made tangible" and "index," Wray juxtaposes an image of a snow-covered wooden mill (seemingly copied from a greeting card or a paint-by-numbers kit) with copper-colored funguslike growths ("faith made tangible") and mounds of some claylike substance in colors that

nature and spirit survive: the remnants of landscape persist in *Untitled #7*, and in another work, Kim's favorite, a Buddha figure commands the canvas. Kim's paintings are formally and thematically resolved, even as they acknowledge the commotion of modern life.

—Jonathan Goodman

Randy Wray at Kagan & Martos

Combining the conventional function of paintings as carriers of image and form with the less common notion of the painting as

