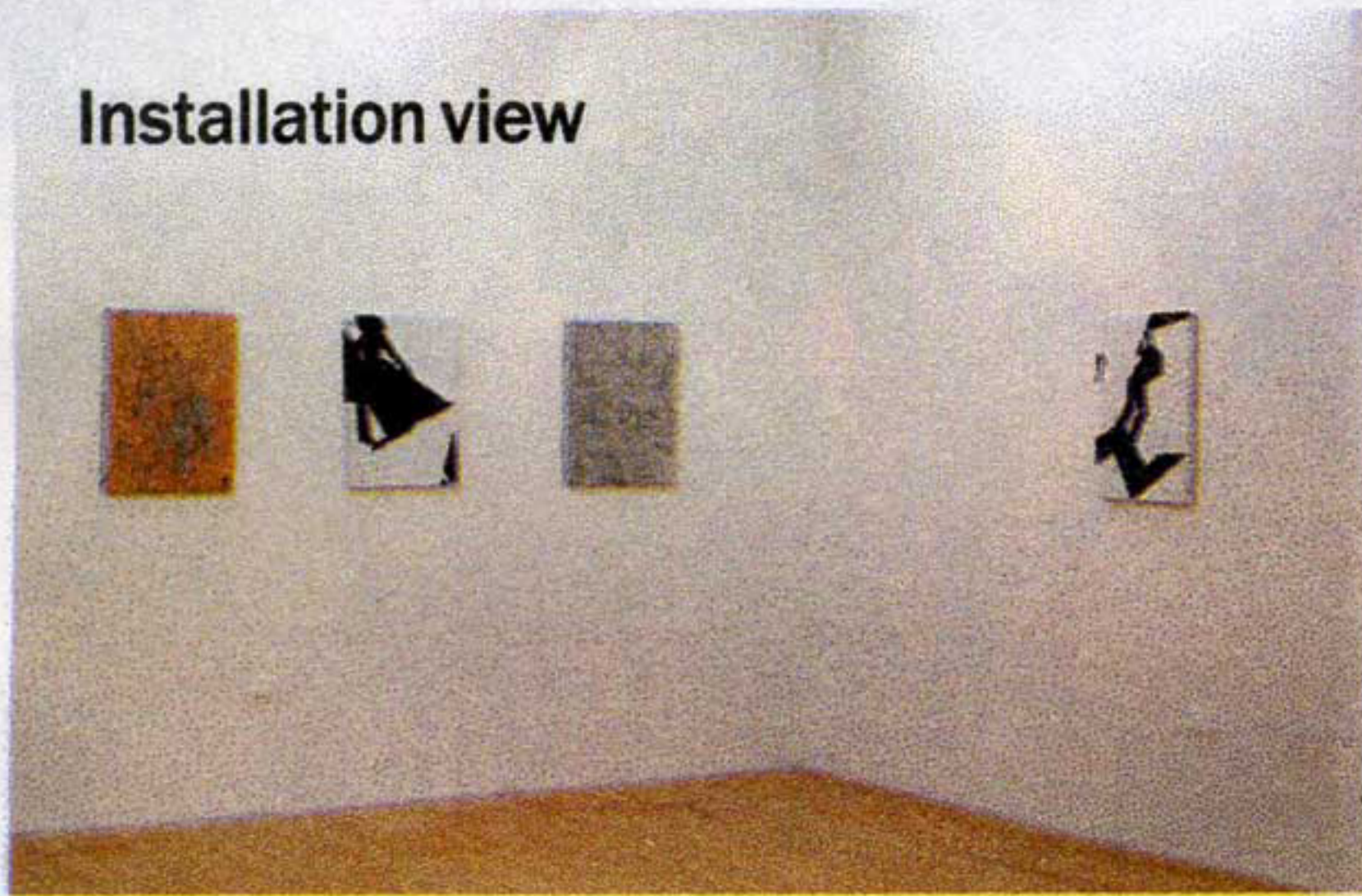


Cheryl Donegan, “Luxury Dust”

★★★★★

Oliver Kamm/5BE Gallery, through Oct 6 (see Chelsea)

Installation view



Shopping malls are Cheryl Donegan’s Mont Sainte-Victoire, the mountain that Cézanne painted repeatedly throughout his lifetime. Like Cézanne did with his subject, Donegan keeps finding new angles on the arena of shopping, this time with colorful paintings specifically inspired by online merchandise sites. At first glance, these 14 works on cardboard seem too small and casual to be considered masterpieces. But on repeated viewing, they turn out to be some of the smartest works up this season.

For those primarily familiar with Donegan’s early performance videos, her turn toward painting may seem

somewhat surprising. Yet since 2002, her work has grown increasingly concerned with the details and detritus of consumerism even as it’s become increasingly abstract. Her current paintings are even more diffuse, mimicking the look of early-20th-century Cubism—and barely revealing that her source material is low-resolution JPEGs grabbed off the Internet. A silhouette of a baseball player pops up in several pieces, including *Still Life with Fuckerball* and *Greatness is 1/3*, but most works are resolutely obtuse.

Retaining the DIY aesthetic of her videos, Donegan gets a lot of beauty out of the cheapest of materials. *Favors* is a gorgeous gem with pink and purple clutter surrounded by lush green triangles. Two pictures made entirely from Mylar tape—*Luxury Dust (Gold)* and *Luxury Dust (Silver)*—demonstrate the formidable textures and forms that can be achieved with an X-Acto knife. Instead of demanding consistency, it may be more rewarding to view Donegan as a kind of low-res Gerhard Richter, who finds new takes on consumer culture by alternating between mediums.

—Barbara Pollack