

## The New York Times

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ROBERTA SMITH Art in Review

# Matt Keegan Jedediah Caesar

In their first shows with this gallery, Matt Keegan, from New York, and Jedediah Caesar, a newcomer who lives in Los Angeles, are separated by more than a continent. In "Any Day Now" Mr. Keegan goes for surgical precision from start to finish (the X-Acto knife is highly favored), while in "Three Views From Space" Mr. Caesar starts with randomness before finishing up with some slicing of his own. Both artists emphasize extreme detail.

Using language, photographic collage, incised walls and seemingly simple but actually complex printing methods, Mr. Keegan conjures up the intimacy of friendship, maybe sex and a sense of social or political solidarity. Layers and double-sidedness seem to fascinate him, most overtly in a screenlike structure, made of drywall and aluminum studs, and perforated with big see-through letters. They spell the over-used greeting "Nice to See You."

In four works trapezoids are meticulously cut into or painted on the wall (look carefully); they repeat the word "men," evoking both solidarity and regimentation. But Mr. Keegan's affinity for randomness is signaled by several large color photographs, documenting either a found installation piece or carefully arranged chunks of pavement-on-pavement.

These variously smooth and rocky aggregates point directly to Mr. Caesar's updates of Process Art, which involve filling makeshift boxes with quantities of trash — everything from grass and lemon rinds to an easy chair — and then topping off the mélange with different amounts of resin. The results hover disconcertingly between geology and garish artifice; they seem to scream Las Vegas.

His pieces employ different applications. One uses a minimal amount of resin, resulting in a bristling aggregate. In others, dense trash-resin chunks have either been left alone; trimmed of outer layers (which remain part of the work); or thinly sliced into a mural-size expanse, which effectively tiles a wall in symmetrical patterns reminiscent of sliced agate, terrazzo and a deviant form of marble. Seeing Mr. Caesar's work in quantity reveals what might be called an Arman problem: While visually alluring, his work verges on gimmicky.

The pairing of these two artists is astute and mutually beneficial, but it also suggests that Mr. Keegan could use some of the juice and muscle taken for granted by Mr. Caesar, who in turn needs more of his colleague's Conceptual subtlety.

*Through Sept. 29 at D'Amelio Terras, 525 West 22nd Street, Chelsea; (212) 352-9400.*