

Lucky DeBellevue's Open Concept at Kai Matsumiya



Long known for his delicate yet playful chenille stem based sculpture, Lucky DeBellevue's latest exhibition "Open Concept" at Kai Matsumiya branches out into territory the artist has been exploring as of late including printing, painting, and design. The title of the exhibition comes from a catch phrase used on Home and Garden Television (HGTV), a mantra for contemporary living spaces. This exhibition is a close engagement of Matsumiya's Stanton Street gallery—DeBellevue's intimate sensibility is that of an artist-cum-interior decorator, creating a distinct domesticity and friendliness within the rooms of the gallery. All the work is positioned and possibly even created with evident forethought as to its interaction with this unique environment. There are kitsch abstract symbols boarding on the Egyptian printed in repeated pattern directly onto the exquisitely roughshod walls; pistachio shells, discarded remnants of a household snack, line the variously sized abstract painted canvases; stalks of black tempura-painted bamboo extend from wooden bases as objects bordering artwork and room accent. Here DeBellevue has continued his exploration of craft and modes of muted kitsch under the influence of Memphis Group design and designer/poet/novelist/social activist William Morris, toeing the line between fine art, design, and decor. In a larger sense, this questions content's relation to fine art itself. The gallery art du jour often poses as objects of deep meaning while maintaining an attractive, even shiny, veneer to entice collectors to buy them. In Open Concept, DeBellevue doesn't purport to answer any "big questions". Instead he undermines these questions with refined visual sensibility and site-specificity. It's a subtle subterfuge, but subversive nonetheless, and pleasing the the eye and soul to boot.

-Brandon Johnson

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