

The New York Times

By Holland Cotter

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'Matter of Time'

Dorsky Gallery

*379 West Broadway, near Broome
Street*

SoHo

Through Oct. 23

The best approach to this theme show is through a cleanly written brochure essay by its curator, Andrew Perchuk, which argues that the renewed interest in handmade work in the 1990's has reintroduced time as a conceptual component of art.

The items he has chosen illustrate the idea in various ways. Michelle Segre's five-foot-high sculpture of a wedge of cheese is an emblem of organic change writ large. Jim Hodges's chain-link spider web refers to ephemeral constructions but must have taken forever to make. The same is true of Jonathan Seliger's labor-intensive sculptures, one of which turns commercial packaging for light bulbs, objects with a limited functional life span, into a monument.

For time-consuming production, though, few artists can beat Charles LeDray, who has quietly shaped up to be one of the decade's most interesting artists. His contributions here include a doll-size suit of men's formal wear, complete with hand-carved buttons, and an inches-tall prayer stool carved from human bone. This piece zeroes in on a distinctive aspect of art in the 90's: its forthright attention to mortality, inspired in large part by the omnipresence of AIDS.

Good as it always is to see these artists, a few more surprises would not have gone amiss, and the show itself certainly breaks no new ground. The interesting thing is how the concept of time has changed over the span of postwar American art, and for a sense of that one must turn again to Mr. Perchuk's essay.

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