

Kandel, Susan. "Happy Convergence." *Los Angeles Times*, 16 November 1995, p. F2-3.

Happy Convergence: There is often something sad about collages, bred, as they are, from homeless bits and pieces of things. Roy Dowell's collaged paintings at Margo Leavin Gallery are different. Here, disparate fragments are put together with such happy industry and secured with bold strokes of paint where they threaten to come undone that melancholy is out of the question.

In keeping with the work of a second-generation, jazz-besotted Cubist like Stuart Davis, Dowell is fond of the sorts of perceptual collisions that signal modern life. Pilfered shards and strips of billboard advertisements—letters, numbers, anonymous marks and fractured images—bump into one another, and then interlock as tightly as a jigsaw puzzle.

The telltale polka dots of mass reproduction are left intact, creating surface textures whose granularity vies with the smooth, Pop-like sheen of other passages. These works are not about the shock of the new but its reassuring persistence—the knowledge that when you wake up in the morning, the media culture will provide you with ample doses of that season's flavor of eye candy.

This sounds more cynical than it looks. Dowell keeps resignation at bay by focusing on small epiphanies: a smiling, slapstick line looping its way across different forms; a sly meditation upon the circle, from a target to the letter O to what looks to be an egg; a vertical stripe of text that articulates pictorial space as surely as one of Barnett Newman's "zips" and, in the process, transforms the sublime into yet another piece of another unseen thing.

■ *Margo Leavin Gallery, 812 N. Robertson Blvd., West Hollywood, (310) 273-0603, through Dec. 2. Closed Sundays and Mondays.*