

spotted with orange, gold and red. An exception is the all-white *Crystal Energy Grids System and Remote Healing*, which has only faint recollections of blue, pink, green and yellow in warped and wavy horizontal lines of illegible handwriting.

The paintings have a busy, dancing sweep from a distance, but up close the carved Styrofoam with its brittle contours and thin edges looks stiff and plotted. Likewise, graphic drama and color are stronger from afar, or in reproduction; intimacy does not become these works.

The compositions of three sunburst paintings—in black, white, and blue/green over red/orange—are as rigid as the carving. They lack the other works' metamorphic sense of play. These three, all titled *Die of Pleasure*, look somewhat like Jay DeFeo's *The Rose* without the obsessiveness.

The gouaches repeat the configurations and titles of some larger reliefs; Pearson must have used them to work out color schemes, since that's what differs. These flat renderings make clear why Pearson's patterns aren't Op art: they have an irregularity that's part organic, part hallucinatory. Who would have thought that lines of roman letters would have such interesting shapes? However, the gouaches lack the glints of reflected light that in the reliefs add to the happy feeling of hysteria.

—Janet Koplos

## James Nares at Paul Kasmin

In his recent exhibition of works from 1999, James Nares again showcased his talents as a gestural-abstractionist extraordinaire. Having moved away from his figure-eight work of the 1980s and the "Luminographs" of the early '90s, Nares is now manufacturing works with a more distilled, sleek calligraphic style. Despite the shift in style, however, he continues to explore the same issues: movement, gesture and surface.

Nares staples his canvases to the floor or lays them flat on a table, then covers them with a smooth, opalescent gray priming ground. Then, using long-handled broom brushes that he designs himself, he mops thinned-out oil paint onto each canvas in a single, swooping gesture. This action is performed swiftly, without conscious premeditation. After assessing the result, Nares invariably erases the mark with a squeegee, and begins again, varying the rhythm and speed of the brush until he arrives at the consummate gesture. The result is a large, highly stylized brushstroke which seems to hover on the pale field.

In a work titled *Jack*, a long, pea green, swirling stroke twists and gnarls its way down and off the 9-by-2-foot vertical painting. *Take 'Em to Missouri*, another vertical-format work, contains a rust-colored brushstroke that sweeps downward, zigzagging

the length of the canvas from top left to bottom right, leaving splatters in its wake.

The results of Nares's trial-and-error approach to painting vary moderately. Each canvas displays one elongated gesture in a single color, with the color, size and configuration of the mark being the only variants. Sometimes the canvases are arranged in groups of three or four, such as *I Stand Up Next to a Mountain*, a large work (9 by 7 feet), made up of four narrow, vertical elements, each containing a single, sinuous brushstroke in neon blue which emerges from the top of the canvas and spirals downward, stopping just short of the bottom edge. The multiple-panel works such as this one are the more successful of the lot because the groupings create complex interactions of choreographic rhythms.

When looking at Nares's work, one is tempted to compare it to David Reed's "photographic" paint strokes and to Roy Lichtenstein's Pop parodies of the Abstract-Expressionist gesture. Yet such comparisons detract from Nares's otherworldly, oddly disembodied, feathery forms. Insofar as his gestures epitomize a controlled spontaneity, Nares's new paintings are visual paradoxes. Like Boccioni's striding figure in bronze whose clothing flutters in the wind, these works manage miraculously to freeze movement itself in paint.

—Maura Reilly

## Lisa Hoke at Holly Solomon

The title of Lisa Hoke's installation was *Ricochet* and, indeed, the colored strings that moored the seven kitelike resin panels comprising the work careened off the surrounding gallery walls in a cartoonish way. The irregularly shaped, transparent panels suspended from the cords were covered with hundreds of drinking straws in neon hues of yellow, green, pink, orange and blue. They had been dropped by the handful into the plastic when it was



James Nares: *So Things Go*, 1999, oil on linen, 80 by 25 inches; at Paul Kasmin.

still liquid, and will remain stuck there forever.

The strings were attached to the walls with various kinds of hardware (ring screws, hinges, drawer pulls), and stretched over and under the floating staircase in the middle of the main gallery space and around the corners of the room. They converged at one end of the gallery, threaded through a complex arrangement of hooks and holders and ultimately attached to a set of counterweights which created the tension that allowed the whole contraption to retain its cat's-cradle complexity. The ballast was a set of cast iron forms, mostly vegetables and fruits, that hung from the ends of some of the strings. The free ends formed a puddle of sorbet-bright fiber on the floor.

*Ricochet* evinced an interest in freezing random accident in place. This idea was reiterated in a series of drawings that accompanied the installation. Titled "Timed Coffee Stain Series", these works on paper consist of dripped and splashed coffee stains that have been outlined with colored pencil and ink in obsessive, concentric circles that turn each chance spill into an esthetic incident. Like the resin panel which "catches" the straws dropped upon it, the paper is a receptacle for wads of colored paper pulp—Technicolor spitballs—applied to

Bruce Pearson: *No No No . . .*, 1998, oil and acrylic on Styrofoam, 48 inches square; at Ronald Feldman.

