

arts wednesday

Running the gamut from endearing to searing

By Cate McQuaid
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Making art is one means of putting order to life. Math is another. They come together, nominally, in Paul Pescador's goofy, endearing, and occasionally searing show "6, 7 or 9" at Anthony Greaney.

The numbers denote relationships. It's not entirely clear how Pescador's formula works, but here's how it has been described: He has two domestic partners, signified by "6." The "7" refers to his extended family, and "9" has to do with relationships outside home and family.

If the math appears quirky, the art does, too. Pescador uses crafty materials and household items to make odd objects and groupings. He photographs them, chops up the photos and collages them together, then shoots them again. Pescador frames these as portraits of faceless, outré characters in buzzy tones, made out of sticks, boxes, and sponges.

The only photo hanging in the gallery depicts a fake foot in a polka-dot sock, a lemon yellow box, and a knotted-up turquoise plastic bag, one on top of the next. The fellow this depicts has pathos and gump-tion. He would show up for a party as the world falls out beneath him.

The showstopper is Pescador's film, also called "6, 7, or 9," in which he uses stop-motion photography to make his rogues' gallery come to life. He strings together scenes in a narration that flies here and there like popping corn.

The artist's domestic partners recur as a pair of lampshades draped in cloth. In one batty sex scene, they begin to remove each other's fabric — then a phone vibrates (high-tech communications and interruptions run throughout), and it's over.



PAUL PESCADOR: 6, 7 or 9

At: Anthony Greaney, 450 Harrison Ave., through June 15.
617-482-0055, www.anthonygreaney.com

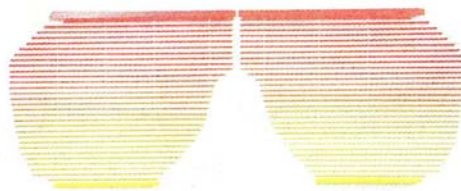
ADAM PARKER SMITH: Angelyne
At: LaMontagne Gallery, 555 East Second St.,
South Boston, through June 15. 617-464-4640,
www.lamontagnegallery.com

CATHERINE KEHOE: Radical Attention
At: Howard Yezerski Gallery, 460 Harrison Ave., through June 4.
617-262-0550, www.howardyezerskigallery.com

With loony characters and eye-quenching colors, "6, 7 or 9" has many qualities of a film aimed at kids, but the undertones of yearning and missed connections demand an older audience than the "SpongeBob SquarePants" set. The work's sweetness lures you in, but inside, it's raw and hurting.

A much larger gambit

Adam Parker Smith garnered attention in March for "Thanks," a show he curated at a New York gallery featuring artworks he had taken from other artists. He made his own pieces for his exhibit at LaMontagne Gallery, but he continues to prod at the defi-



Clockwise (from left): Photo in Paul Pescador's "6, 7 or 9"; Adam Parker Smith's "Untitled (Kanye Shutter Shades)"; "Grape still life (after de Heem)" by Catherine Kehoe.



no), a charred, buckling piano, pipes out a melancholy tune as blackened keys depress along the keyboard. Parker Smith crafted this sculpture by hand; only the pedals come from an actual piano. Even as he contemplates the phantom artistry behind an instrument without a maestro, he turns the idea on its head with his own technical mastery. Makers can make things. Creation and destruction, though, Parker Smith's work implies, are part of a much larger gambit.

Planar perceptions

It's a joy, now and again, to return to the simple complexities of painting. Catherine Kehoe, whose latest show is up at Howard Yezerski Gallery, has such a keen way of seeing that even her smallest paintings suggest there's ever more to perceive.

She offers a couple of still lifes on small black blocks; they appear to project and recess at the same time. In "Grape still life (after de Heem)," the individual fruits are undefined, but drape in patches of green, glistening and lean, thanks to the always planar quality with which Kehoe constructs her forms, so that everything seems like a reflection off the clean face of

a prism. Faceted, they shine like gems. Yet they're painterly, smudged, organic and not crystalline.

Every shape, every line, every tone is a considered piece of the whole, which sets Kehoe's paintings teetering between representation and abstraction. "Prosty" has at its center an inflatable snowman circled by a hula-hoop, wearing a yellow blow-up ring around his neck. I didn't see any of that at first; my eyes were so enchanted by the play of forms, the tangy bursts of color, the circles within circles.

Kehoe's paintings remind me of Mary Oliver's line from the poem "Wild Geese": "... the world offers itself to your imagination." A snowman, a circle, a dab of orange — oh, the possibilities.

Kehoe's exhibit is the last at Howard Yezerski Gallery before it merges with Ellen Miller Gallery next month. Miller is vacating her space at 38 Newbury St., where the leases of several other galleries are also up.

ACME Fine Art has announced plans to move to the Thayer Street neighborhood, and has already set up a temporary third floor space at 450 Harrison Ave. Martha Richardson Fine Art and Robert Klein Gallery have signed new leases at 38 Newbury, but Klein will maintain a presence on Harrison Avenue, with a satellite gallery at Ars Libri.

Cate McQuaid can be reached at catemcquaid@gmail.com.