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April 1, 2005

## Art in Review; Alexander Ross

By KEN JOHNSON

Feature

530 West 25th Street

Chelsea

Through April 23

Alexander Ross continues to serve up funny, weird, semi-abstract Pop-Surrealist paintings. Mr. Ross's signature imagery consists of green organic forms that in different cases look like enlarged views of microorganisms, slimy tropical plants or the inside or outside surfaces of an amphibious monster. When the green stuff does not entirely fill the picture, backgrounds are sky blue, which gives some pictures the look of extraterrestrial landscapes.

The way Mr. Ross constructs his paintings remains as important as his imagery. With a finicky, brushy touch he creates sculptural illusionism by painting incremental, progressively darker or lighter bands. Some viewers may detect Photoshop manipulations in the topographical banding and in the crystalline sky patterns. The combination of imagery and technique suggests an industrious and nerdy teenager steeped in science fiction and cannabis.

But the analytic method also gives the surfaces of Mr. Ross's paintings an optically gripping, all-over texture and, in the instance of two all-green pictures, an extraordinarily complex, vibrating luminosity. Mr. Ross plays with other formal dimensions, too, like shape in the case of the image of radiating thick, green petals centered on a canvas with scalloped edges. His paintings represent, you might say, the mind toying with its anxieties about the primordial body.

In the rear gallery a display of Mr. Ross's drawings of goofy organic structures and textures gives a more intimate experience of his impressively skillful and versatile draftsmanship and his visionary humor. KEN JOHNSON

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