

The New York Times

'THREADS'

Through March 21. Foxy Production, 2 East Broadway, Manhattan. 212-239-2758, foxyproduction.com.
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Textiles today are in the same place that ceramics occupied a decade ago: ubiquitous in contemporary art and used in numerous ways. With just four artists, "Threads" surveys several of the possibilities. In the works here, textiles are made, appropriated and alluded to.

The abstract artist Ulrike Müller leads the way with "Rug (con triángulos)," a large hand-woven wool piece (for floor or wall, as here). Its rich purple field is punctuated by 18 large triangles in various hues (including russet, pink and dark tweedy green), forming a beautiful meditation on the color effects of dyed and woven wool. The polymathic artist Steve Reinke contributes a stunning display of 22 small needlepoints that are searing in

color, largely abstract and quite different from his ironic, more reality-based work in video. Resembling both miniature TV monitors or paintings, they punch well above their bantamweight.

In wall pieces titled "Wound" and "Burden," Tuesday Smillie layers together disparate swaths, lengths and scraps of fabric and plastics, illuminating hierarchies of gender, class and taste with a precision and subtlety that reveals itself slowly. Look for details — bits of language, a pink denim back pocket on an expanse of pink moire, for example. Jonathan Payne's modest lattices are made of shredded paper and gesso and then stitched together in sections like a quilt. They are painted front and back with brushy layers of color that peek through one another on the front, while on the back, casting reflections on the wall. Crisscrossing like girders on a bridge, these pieces suggest a kind of architectural lace. They lavishly complicate the grid that is the basis both of classical modernism and weaving. This is an excellent show.

ROBERTA SMITH