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Alyson Shotz

'Phase Shift'

Derek Eller

615 West 27th Street, Chelsea

Through April 4

Alyson Shotz's sculptures perk up a decades-old post-Minimalist idiom with a dash of pop science. The works in "Phase Shift," her fourth solo show at the gallery, are her strongest yet.

Ms. Shotz evokes natural phenomena with accumulations of beads, pins and other common materials. She isn't alone in this — Tara Donovan comes to mind — but her creations have a geekier, less arbitrary aspect. Often they respond to the challenge of visualizing concepts from theoretical physics (string theory, dark matter).

"Phase Shift" strings thousands of plastic magnifying lenses along stainless-steel wires that extend from a corner of the gallery's back room. Ms. Shotz has used lenses before, as in the immense curved-wall installation "The Shape of Space," but in "Phase Shift" the quantity isn't as overwhelming.

The disc-shaped lenses are graduated in size, creating a distortion of perspective, and refract light to dazzling effect. The formal associations are rich and sometimes contradictory: water droplets; a stop-motion photograph of an explosion.

Two sculptures in the front gallery are clever but not wholly transformative. "Suspension," a cluster of glass beads attached to the ends of twisted wires, is Calder taken to the nth degree. "Thread Drawing #3," a wavelike wall relief of black strings stretched taut between closely spaced pins, mimics the warped grids of computer modeling.

The best piece here is "Equilibrium," loops of silver-beaded piano wire that hang from curved metal spines. It might be described as a shimmering, skeletal version of Richard Serra's "Torqued Ellipses," but really it seems like a visitor from a higher dimension.

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