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ART IN REVIEW

Sarah Braman's 'Yours' at Mitchell-Innes & Nash —

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In her fourth solo in a New York gallery, Sarah Braman continues the confident development of her loquacious, hardscrabble formalist assemblages. On this occasion Ms. Braman has cross-bred slices of a small, much used camper with Minimalist volumes of tinted Plexiglas, highlighting both with luscious touches of brushed or spray-painted color. She often tilts them on the diagonal, evoking the less strict, less vaunted Minimalism of Tony Rosenthal's popular black cube at Astor Place in the East Village.

Perpendiculars predominate, creating a false sense of clarity. But the contrasts of purpose and association mixed with exaltations of relatively pure color and space keep you off balance. Any single viewpoint tends to be jarringly rebutted by the next, forcing continual readjustments of expectations. In "Coffin" an added sheet of mirror reveals that the camper's interior has been lavishly painted. "On By," which is all Minimalist simplicity (no added camper parts), the surprise lies in the way the interior colors change when viewed from different sides: an opulent optical mystery.

In a series of wall pieces Ms. Braman gives more exclusive vent to color and hands-on process, landing largely in the vicinity of painting while working mostly on plywood with bright pastels. Words occasionally enter the picture, as in "Lay Down Down." Here the powdery delicacy of color works especially well against the harshness of the support, while the loose compositions suggest also-ran Color Field artists like Jack Bush and Friedel Dzubas.

Ms. Braman has many precedents, among them the transparent structures of Dan Graham; the architectural fragments of Gordon Matta-Clark; the assemblages of Jessica Stockholder; and the eccentric campers of Andrea Zittel. The paintings made me think, as have many exhibited in galleries this season, that Julian Schnabel is way overdue for his comeback. Still, despite all this company, a clear voice is heard here. It argues that form and social commentary are not strange bedfellows and that they often combine most effectively when found materials are willfully transformed.