

The New York Times

Art in Review

Vincent Fecteau

*Matthew Marks Gallery
523 West 24th Street, Chelsea
Through Oct. 24*

All art forms could be described as time based. Mediums like performance and video have duration built in. But even paintings, sculptures and other object-based arts have to persuade you to stick around.

Vincent Fecteau's new abstract tabletop sculptures, which form one of the best gallery shows in New York this fall, are plenty sticky. Airy yet hunkered down, the eight pieces here were all made in 2008 and first shown at the Art Institute of Chicago. They are Mr. Fecteau's largest — bushel-basket, rather than shoebox, size — and they bundle together painting, sculpture and architecture into unpredictable, almost performative structures.

These structures twist, turn and surprise, changing dramatically as you move around them. Each piece is an irrational aggregate of forms and openings made from papier-mâché molded over different objects and painted one color, with occasional addition of black and white. The colors — purple, turquoise, dark mustard — are as insistently idiosyncratic as the uneven surfaces, odd protrusions, hints of pasted newspaper and arcs to nowhere.

If flattened, Mr. Fecteau's sculptures might resemble paintings by Thomas Nozkowski or Raoul De Keyser. Different notions of touch are explored. Sometimes a seemingly monochromatic piece will reveal patches of black that may be solid



Two Vincent Fecteau sculptures, part of a series of eight at Matthew Marks Gallery.

or textured, or rubbed on, suggesting use and wear. White interior spaces or underbellies sometimes can seem soiled, suggesting a less deliberate, less loving kind of contact. In Mr. Fecteau's work everything invites you to look closer and to better understand the possibilities of material expression.

His pieces provide unusually detailed evidence of the way an artist's thinking is deflected imperfectly through an object. It ricochets toward your brain, which instantly starts determining whether or not you will be sticking around. **ROBERTA SMITH**