

GLADSTONE GALLERY

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ART IN REVIEW; Jim Hodges

By HOLLAND COTTER

CRG Gallery

93 Grand Street

SoHo

Through Oct. 10

Jim Hodges's art is based on a labor-intensive, incremental shaping of ordinary materials: curtains sewn from cloth flowers, diaries kept on paper napkins. Each process turns fragments into a whole, and the results are metaphors for both spending and freezing time.

Fragmentation and time are at the center of this show. On one wall hangs a mural made up of shards of shattered glass painstakingly pieced together to provide damaged but scintillating reflections. Across from it is a collage (it looks like a Paris-years Ellsworth Kelly) of thousands of commercial color chips that together might be seen to embody the entire chromatic range of the world.

In other pieces, temporal images come to the fore. In "He and I," two overlapping sets of concentric circles are drawn on the wall. Resembling tree rings, one set is measured to Mr. Hodges's height, the other to that of his lover. The circling chronological form also recurs in "Landscape," a self-portrait and the show's most remarkable piece.

It consists of shirts of various sizes layered one inside the other. Each shirt is tailored from different material, and each material represents a time or event from the artist's life. The outer layer, the present, is a plain white cotton man's shirt; several layers down is a striped child's pajama top; nestled at the core of the piece is a white baby's jacket. All of these strata are visible at collar level, where, once again, a tree-ring pattern is evoked.

Although personal history is Mr. Hodges's chief subject, he avoids dropping into easy nostalgia. The meticulous assembling and layering that go into each piece is clearly a lot of hard work. And it's that sense of working, night and day, through thick and thin, both on life and on art that makes this show moving.

HOLLAND COTTER