

June 10, 2005

Art in Review; Richard Bloes 'The Sun Rises in the Evening'

By KEN JOHNSON

Feature
530 West 25th Street, Chelsea
Through June 24

The enchanting sculpture by Richard Bloes in the small rear gallery at Feature looks like something constructed by a furniture maker who, in a whimsical mood, decided to try something creative with scraps found around the shop. Attached to and hanging by strings and cables from a large, freestanding wooden framework are all kinds of wooden elements: dowels, turnings, squiggly and zigzag shapes, a partially assembled chair, dollhouse-scale chair parts and a pendulum driven by an electric clock motor. The colors of the Swedish flag and Ikea, yellow and blue, are painted here and there.

At first the clunky, amateurish look is off-putting, but then you begin to discern an intricacy and precision that give it an intriguing but enigmatic sense of purpose. A silent video showing close views with many parts swinging and spinning creates a mysterious Cubist expressionism, and the jump from the actual structure to the virtual semi-abstraction adds to the magic.

To get to Mr. Bloes's installation, you must first pass through an exceptionally diverting 23-person exhibition, titled "The Sun Rises in the Evening," in the main gallery. The paintings, sculptures and drawings on view almost defy generalization, ranging as they do from Richard Rezac's sleek, faux-Modernist abstract sculpture to Davor Vrankic's weird magic realist pencil drawings to B. Wurtz's seemingly artless tower of plywood blocks and plastic bags. But there is something that almost everything shares with Mr. Bloes's work: a winning combination of exacting craftsmanship and offbeat imagination. KEN JOHNSON