

NEW YORK REVIEWS

Bruce Pearson

RONALD FELDMAN

Bruce Pearson's new, eye-catching abstractions continue to look like paintings on steroids, decked out in snazzy, high-contrast colors. Made of double layers of Styrofoam slabs, they teeter between painting and relief. Pearson hot-wires them to cut the grooves and channels of his patterns—like cloisonné without the inlay—then colors them in with oil and acrylic paints. He also uses a computer to scan his drawings and then reverses them to produce symmetrical compositions.

At first, many of the paintings look like Rorschach tests, but they are actually based on texts, well-known paintings, nature, and Pearson's photographs of nature, abstracted to the verge of the subliminal. There's certainly enough going on here: Botticelli's lyrical palette from *The Birth of Venus* appears in *Ecstatic Explosions of Romantic Love*, a title lifted from a romance novel; Matisse's *Dance* is the base of *Danse?*, inflected through Pearson's Pollock-inspired drawing; while others look like dappled and moiréd Impressionist paintings. And there are great titles, such as the philosophical *Who's to Say That a Shoe Is Not a Piece of Sculpture?* (especially when it costs as much) and *Food Love Air Light Trees and Architecture*, a critic's summary of French cinema, the press release says.

It's all fake, embalmed, nature seen through the wholly artificial. It's all laminated surface; the glare of orange, pink, green, yellow, red, blue rebuffs the gaze. Even white is whipped to a high sheen like mounds of Cool Whip. Surface rules. And the paintings work. While there is nothing particularly new here, Pearson packages it in smart, shining ways.



Bruce Pearson,
*Who's to Say That a
Shoe Is Not a Piece
of Sculpture?*, 2000,
oil and acrylic on
Styrofoam,
60" x 48" x 6".
Ronald Feldman.

—Lilly Wei