

# The New York Times

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## Curtis Mitchell

Andrea Rosen Gallery  
130 Prince Street  
SoHo  
Through June 13

Curtis Mitchell is often lumped with a group of younger "scatter artists" who put together found materials in apparently haphazard arrangements. Their sources are in the installation and performance art of the 1960's and 70's, to which they bring up-to-date concerns. Mr. Mitchell's recent work, for example, has dealt with homelessness and dispossession.

Two pieces in the current show also appear to refer to these themes. They are mural-size collages of hundreds of torn photographs (all photo-lab rejects) attached to sheets of plywood. The images themselves appear to be shots of residential interiors — corners of rooms, close-ups of furniture and so forth — notable for their blandness and for the absence of the human figure. Unfortunately, blandness infects the work itself. The countless ripped fragments, layered one on top of another, have a certain air of sadness (as almost any distressed material in a pristine gallery setting does), but the most striking thing here is that so much texture can generate so little energy.

Other work in the show is more successful. The artist has burned some Persian carpets and painted the charred and mended sections with a flesh-colored paint that looks like grafted skin. There is something truly creepy about the implied synthesis of the human body with a manufactured object — especially when the results are meant to be placed underfoot. Far more than his photographic work, these pieces seem to have exercised Mr. Mitchell's imagination and brought his political concerns into focus.

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