

THE ART CAPADES

Pre-CAM razzle-dazzle with pen and lights

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Well, it was another successful First Friday- we came, we saw, we conferred. And if you spent the evening circling the block for parking and missed the shows, you still have the time to get to Blue Star to see them.

The biggest buzz has to be the UTSA Satellite Space's latest MFA graduate exhibition, in which Brian Jobe and **Judith Cottrell** share the space seamlessly (through June 11, 115 Blue Star, 212-7146). Jobe's *The Forest Underneath* continues his series of colorful sculptural installations using plastic zip-ties. Two rows of white plaster "tops" tied with green and white ties run along the base of three deep-green walls like decorative frosting at the edge of a cake. Perfectly spaced lines of clear monofilament run at an angle from the plaster shapes to the top of the walls. They glint in the heart of the gallery light, lending the wall paint its own plastic quality.

Jobe fills one of the tricky side galleries with a sea of green-and-white zip-tie knots that lie directly on the floor, leaving a semicircle of empty space just inside the doorway. Tilted "Jacks," the tied formations vaguely resemble our parents' metal starbursts scattered on the ground.

This work is endlessly surprising despite its signature element, and humble without being cloying. It combines elements of painting, sculpture, and assemblage, but remains smartly edited to let the materials sing. Frankly, we could all take a page from the book of Jobe.

Keeping up her end of the bargain beautifully, **Judith Cottrell** names her neighboring show after her tools- *Just Gel with little BiC*. Her shaped, monochromatic canvases are covered in swarms of BiC ink marks. Cottrell has yet to inundate the local scene with her work, which heightens the anticipations, and the new variations on her medium are strong. Each canvas is a different background color, and the higher the contrast with ink, the better the piece. In some of the more attention-grabbing pieces- such as "Rolly", with its rippled fabric of tiny marks- her marks have progressed from an all-over misting of lines to distinct shapes. The freneticism, panels of color, and sculptural canvases make her work an excellent match for Jobe's.

Also at Blue Star Contemporary Art Center, Cactus Bra features a North Texas team that has taken over the windowless gallery and turned it into an interactive light show they call Dazzle (through June 30, 106-C Blue Star, 226-6688). Susan Cheal made light drawings in her studio with battery chargers, sparklers, and Christmas-tree lights, and captured the effects on film using a long exposure. It reminds me of Gjon Mili's famous 1949 photo of Picasso drawing a centaur with a small flashlight, so I was predisposed to the like process.

Douglas Holmes composed a companion score on a computer and uses a "living" program to sync his sounds with Cheal's lights in an infinite number of random connections. Rather than leaving viewers to walk into the gallery and see the show projected on white walls, the collaborators strung tulle from the ceiling. Tulle is known for making skirts fuller, but it's the Swiss cheese of fabric and is perfect for creating a three-dimensional screen in space. Light squiggles of varying qualities are multiplied in the folds- frankly, it's cool.

During the brief intermissions between percussive and synthesized sounds, little stars appear. These are apparently triggered by the viewers' voices, so when you go, make lots of noise. In the meantime, two stand-up fans unabashedly blow the fabric about. Sure, maybe it's the poor man's Pierre Huyghe, but it's a spectacle of wonder, and I like it.