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ARTS | ART IN REVIEW

ART IN REVIEW; 'Drawn to Scale'

By **KEN JOHNSON** AUG. 6, 1999

Dieu Donne Paper Mill
433 Broome Street
SoHo

Through Sept. 18

Wynn Kramarsky
560 Broadway, at Prince Street
SoHo

Through next Friday

To inaugurate a new big-scale paper press, the Dieu Donne Paper Mill invited six artists to make the paper-based works now on view in this two-gallery exhibition.

While the interest of the show is in the tension between tradition and innovation, craft-based conservatism prevails, making for materially attractive objects but dampening artistic excitement.

Two of the artists simply paint on their pieces of paper. On black sheets, in one case embedded with rows of string, Sara Sosnowy has painted dense, lush patterns of gold dots, creating the show's most visually engaging works. Alice Aycock painted studies for a sculptural project, floating images of swirling, elasticized architectural elements on rich red or purple pages.

The other artists make the medium at least part of the message.

In Steven Steinman's works, gauzy blue pattern is embedded in paper to luminous effect, while David Jeffrey mixes formalism and illusionism in a rectangle of dark brown ridged material resembling industrial corrugated roofing. More cerebrally, Mel Bochner watermarked sheets of paper with ghostly, translucent letters, repeatedly spelling "Language is not transparent."

The most interesting work is that of Elena del Rivero, who subjected large sheets of paper to real-life processes. She slept on one large white sheet neatly imprinted with the title "The Bed" and then sewed up the torn parts. "The Table," printed with a week's worth of menus, was used as a tablecloth and bears stains from the meals described.

The rest of the show could use more of Ms. del Rivero's insouciantly inventive attitude toward its precious material.