

Davis Rhodes, “Untitled ’09”

Team Gallery, through Oct 3
(see Soho)

It’s interesting how far simple ideas are stretched out these days. In 26-year-old Davis Rhodes’s first New York solo show, a series of soaring “paintings” in an array of colors are hung systematically along the walls with either the number one or the shape of a hand with a stretched thumb and forefinger incised into the material. In some cases, the ripped fabric is left to hang as it sees fit. Spontaneity and gravity are allowed their turn in the creative process with varying degrees of success, producing billows, waves and folds, evoking lush drapes here, suggesting a cold metal sculpture there and settling into a flimsy non-state elsewhere.

In others, the numeral is held in place by a reflective collage element, and it stands majestically in the middle of the work. “I am Number One,” these seem to say, tauntingly, defiantly. The rudimentary nature of this number and the whimsicality of



Installation view

the hand—also forming the number one—effectively throws into question the whole notion of content. This forces the viewer into interacting with the physical process involved in making and installing the art (spray-painting, slashing, stapling) and with the evocatively named colors (sun yellow, bubblegum, banner red, totally tangerine).

Like many of his contemporaries, Rhodes seems to be mostly interested in analyzing the practice of art—its limitations and effects. In this ambitious, single-note outing, he delivers a visually arresting performance, full of theater but short on substance and surprises.

—*Nana Asfour*