

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## August Gallery Shows in New York City

By PETER PLAGENS  
Aug. 11, 2016

### Nancy Shaver: Dress the Form

Derek Eller  
300 Broome St., (212) 206-6411  
Through Aug. 19

“Intelligence,” writes Jared Buckheiser in the gallery brochure accompanying this exhibition, “is attained through material labor and institutional learning equally. [The artist] asks that this be acknowledged by showing us what can be seen. There is no top down or bottom up. There are only things.”

That, in a nutshell, is both the virtue and the vice of this exhibition by Nancy Shaver (b. 1946), a longtime member of the graduate sculpture faculty at Bard College. The show combines a compulsively grid-oriented installation with the serendipity of a thrift shop (Ms. Shaver once ran one as an art project). Everything from small pieces of wooden furniture to mounted rectangles of patterned cloth to ceramic tchotchkes spreads across the walls and out onto the floor of the main gallery. Separate freestanding assemblages pose here and there, but although they’re momentarily alluring, they seem like chunks edited out of the big, cacophonous central work, “Quilt” (2016).

A raucous democracy is at work here (Ms. Shaver’s list of artist-collaborators is as long as the wall for “Quilt”), and particular objects, time and again, entice one to stop and look closely. The show’s energy and gregariousness are undermined, however, by didacticism, such as a spine of framed collages, running through the middle of “Quilt,” juxtaposing Tiffany jewelry ads with somber news stories. Art professors, like priests and police officers, are never off duty.



An installation view of 'Nancy Shaver: Dress the Form,' at Derek Eller Gallery through Aug. 19. PHOTO: NANCY SHAVER/DEREK ELLER GALLERY