

PATRICIA SWEETOW GALLERY

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June 14, 2006

The Art of the Back Story

By Hiya Swanhuysen



Jamie Vasta, "Lights"

As you look at the art in "**Peripheries of Narrative**," give yourself a little extra time. Stop in front of each piece and take a slow breath. As your eyes become accustomed to the basic facts of the works — a ship, glitter, string — you'll be rewarded for your patience with little pops of recognition. Guest curator Kim Anno apparently cherry-picked some of the best work from the recent graduates of California College of the Arts' MFA program and put it into a show with a tricky sort of cohesion: All the contributors create artwork with a hidden-in-plain-sight quality. Katie Lewis' pins and strings stand out; as you contemplate the reddish resin she's hand-applied to thousands of pinheads, subtle shadows appear, and you realize that those shadings change with the sun. **Jamie Vasta's** glittering canvases look like a collaboration between Monet and Liberace, and the surprise is the different textures the artist gets from the sparkling bits, as if she'd placed each flake into a specific planar relationship with its neighbors. And it doesn't require any calm at all to appreciate Michele Carlson's crazy-quilt galleons and billows, since they're huge and dramatic but somehow also wistful; you could be jumping up and down and not miss out. But take that extra minute and you could spy the heaps of tiny, identical dolls inhabiting the deck of the boat. Susan Chen and Weston Teruya also contribute.