

HORTON GALLERY

The New York Times

KELTIE FERRIS

Dear Sir or Madam

Sunday

237 Eldridge Street, at Houston Street, Lower East Side

Through Jan. 18

The newly chastened art world may be feeling like the 1970s redux, but the '80s East Village scene comes to mind when looking at the solo debut of Keltie Ferris. This is remarkable given that Ms. Ferris, born in Louisville in 1977, couldn't have been there the first time around.

Ms. Ferris's five large-scale paintings, made with oil, acrylic and spray paint on canvas, synthesize Mudd Club-era tendencies toward graffiti and neo-expressionism. At the same time they recall the more esoteric styles of Philip Taaffe and especially Ross Bleckner. A prime example is "Ragnarok," with its scattering of airbrushed dots over a rough-textured, woodlike surface.

An affection for the era's pop culture seeps into Ms. Ferris's carefully layered abstractions. The blue-and-orange starburst of "Boy Wonder" could have been plucked, as the title suggests, from reruns of the old "Batman" show. Mazes that owe more to Pac-Man than to Borges form the background of "Sincerely Yours" and the foreground of "Stritch." The overall impression is of the art of an earlier generation filtered through a young painter's own nostalgia for the era of her childhood. **KAREN ROSENBERG**