

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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"SOMETHING, ANYTHING?"

An enjoyable, very hip group show curated by the artist Nayland Blake that features raucous oddments in many mediums by dozens of contemporaries and a few honored dead. Some of the works are the kind of thing that artists make as jokes, for each other and for themselves; others evince the cracked sincerity of outsiders or the professional zaniness of comic-strip cartoonists (Ernie Bushmiller, George Herriman, Kaz). Serious works with wacky aspects (by Philip Guston, Ken Price, Cindy Sherman, and others) are dragooned into Blake's laughing academy to happily disorienting effect. The late Ray Johnson, the passive-aggressive "mail artist," seems to be the show's spectral guru, and Mike Kelley comes as no surprise. Reason? Taste? Never heard of them. But the installation, centered on a huge display console, is smart. In a back room, for the show's duration, a live d.j. spins vinyl from Blake's collection of more than three thousand LPs: that's a piece, too, titled "Ruins of a Sensibility, 1972-2002." Through Aug. 16. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200.)