

The New York Times
28 January 2000
p. E37

ART IN REVIEW: Adriana Varejao
Lehmann Maupin
39 Greene Street
SoHo
Through Feb. 12

BY KEN JOHNSON

The work of Adriana Varejao, a 36-year-old Brazilian painter, sculptor and conceptualist, ranges from politically suggestive surrealism to shallow formal game playing. The first and best piece in this show is a nightmarish hybrid of painting and sculpture: what appears to be a rectangular section of European-style blue-and-white tiles has torn and slipped like skin, revealing an underlying stew of bloody entrails. It is like a good special-effects event in a horror movie, as well as a visceral metaphor about terror underlying the veneer of colonialist civilization.

In other works, Ms. Varejao leaves out the horror and fools around with paradoxes of illusionism and literalism. She paints a section of blue tiles onto a collection of variously sized stacked and leaning white canvases so that it looks like a slide projection. And she paints pictures of the sea overlapping canvases and the wall, making it look as if the immaterial images had slipped off their physical moorings.

In some works, Ms. Varejao includes dishware, the blue-and-white pattern of which puns on the foamy sea surfaces that she paints. The bloody guts work is gimmicky, too, but more intriguingly layered.