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Art in Review

Nobu Fukui

*Stephen Haller Gallery
542 West 26th Street
Chelsea
Through Tuesday*

The orderly grids that serve as the basis for Nobu Fukui's dense but rhythmic paintings are animated and almost obliterated by layers of newspaper clippings, patches of carnival color, swatches of fabric, beads and other embellishments. Their lively surfaces sometimes suggest game boards and at other times the heavily stylized nature symbolism of Japanese screens.

No single point in them holds the eye. In some, color comes and goes in intense bursts, relieved by quieter areas, as in the very large "Christmas Day," in which ectoplasmic shapes of gray trailing streams and runs of paint hover on a festive, varicolored Expressionist ground lighted up like an abstract version of Times Square. "In a Brooklyn Boom" (the titles are taken from newspaper clippings layered into the surfaces), the rhythmic repetition of varicolored chevrons entices as they plunge down a vertical canvas of fiery red and somber brown, studded overall with clusters of beads. The whole gives the impression of a brilliant theatrical curtain. "Wicked" is a gameboardlike piece whose center is a circle of broken concentric rings invaded by darting flecks and thrusts of color and noncolor. The inevitable tiny colored balls add another lively dimension. Mr. Fukui, who's been on the exhibiting scene since the 1960's, is still a painter of impressive drive and energy.

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