

ART IN REVIEW

Johannes Girardoni

Stephen Haller Gallery

540 West 26th Street

Chelsea

Through March 11

Spareness and sensuality make appealing combinations in Johannes Girardoni's sculpture-paintings. Minimalist slabs of smooth wax in rich monochromes, contrastingly placed in settings of no-color weathered wood or raw metal, they are so tactile that the eye feels as well as sees them.

The seductiveness of this Austrian-born artist's elegance of color and surface gains edge from the plainness of their setting, like a vamp in denim overalls. Sometimes the settings incorporate negative space, like the striking "Seven Silent Moments." In it, four paired verticals of wax in a subdued slate gray, each pair joined by wood strips across top and bottom, are arranged horizontally on the wall with gaps between, providing seven intervals of visual silence.

More often, color is the prime attraction, as in "Revelation Open," a wall tablet in a powerful deep cherry red, underlined by three well-seasoned planks. Or an untitled one in which 17 narrow wax slabs of brilliant electric blue are laid atop one another on a shelf of the same weathered wood. Paint and its reverberations are enticingly celebrated here.

GRACE GLUECK