

Art in America

Stewart Uoo

at 47 Canal,
through Feb. 14



Installation view of Stewart Uoo's exhibition "Curtains"; at 47 Canal, New York. Photo: Joerg Lohse.

The three wall-mounted sculptures in Stewart Uoo's "Curtain Moment" series have the dimensions and hardware of window treatments, but the frilly excess of their ornamentation evokes the sort of over-decorated theater where you might see an old operetta. This is a stage of the lower body. The curtains and trim are fashioned from spandex and jersey, the fabrics of men's underwear, but used in unwearable quantities and shapes; in one of the sculptures, the white elastic band from a pair of briefs snakes below the whole length of the rod. But the objects suspended at the center of each sculpture—sacs, eggs and bulging orbs, wound with strips of red and flecked with beads and crystals—suggest parts of the female reproductive system. Uoo's new works share motifs with textile assemblages from the 1960s and '70s by Franklin Williams, his former teacher, in which colorful pieces of cloth and twine are organized along the biosymmetry of the inner organs. A photo series hung amid the other works plays with the setting of the gallery; in one image, the model, a generously proportioned blonde, poses in worn black lace hose in 47 Canal's back office, with installation equipment hanging on a pegboard in the background. Rough square cuts through the office walls let the viewer peer into the back and connect the photo to its setting. Tempting as it might be to write it off as a dash of self-reflexive flair so common in Lower East Side galleries, the gesture orients the viewer in a real space of concealment and disclosure, the more intimate and fantastic analogue of which is imagined in the sculptures.—*Brian Droitcour*