

**GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN**

**ART** GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

**Mitchell Albus**

A dozen heart-quickenning seashell sculptures on tall pedestals draw viewers into an airy maze at one end of the gallery. The monochromatic formations—materials include blue mussels, channelled whelks, and eastern oysters—have a fairy-tale magnetism, with their craggy bulk and impossible spires. These works, made between 1989 and this year, are complemented by oil paintings on the surrounding walls, abstractions of spongy, aqueous, ethereal gestures. The show also includes a group of wonderful fabric sculptures, from another decades-spanning series: ambiguous sea-slug forms of tufted brocade and tassels. Albus is best known as a gallerist, a kind of art-world oracle who champions important underdogs before others catch on. (Lee Lozano and Barkley Hendricks are just two examples.) This oasis of a summer show proves that the beachcomber also possesses a fascinating artistic vision of his own.

— *Johanna Fateman*