



Reviews

“Speed Limit”



Installation view

Redhead, through Fri 26
(see Elsewhere)

“Speed Limit” first opened in late February as an empty gallery. A call for contributions billed it as a “participatory history of women’s art,” from which not one submission would be rejected because “your concern is enough to qualify your involvement.” More than 120 artists made the trek to the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council’s Financial District space, filling the single-room gallery to capacity with works of wildly varying style and skill. The result is less a history than a cacophony.

Gray and grainy snapshots hang above a maze of unprepossessing sketches, paintings and printouts. An uncredited ink drawing is taped to the side of a flat file, next to a poster for United Jewish Appeal-sponsored art

classes; its dusty top displays ceramics next to piles of business cards. Wall labels are among the curatorial conventions that went out with the bathwater here; most of the work is unidentified.

About one tenth of these works would be at home in more conventional surroundings, for instance a commercial gallery. Among them are a knobby crocheted cozy for an aluminum stepladder by Agata Olek Oleksiak and Naomi White’s photographs based on the life of Dadaist It girl Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. Whether or not the balance of the show succeeds in its political goals, the gallery’s curators, by abdicating their responsibility—in effect, by going on strike—have made their absence felt. Here’s hoping they’ll be back on the job next time.—*Sophie Fels*