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B37

ART IN REVIEW

Greg Colson

Sperone Westwater
121 Greene Street, SoHo
Through Feb. 24

With deadpan wit, Greg Colson, a Los Angeles sculptor, addresses our modern need to bring order to chaos. Each of his round, retro-style "Pie Chart" paintings is just that: a pie chart of neatly lettered and illustrated sections representing the results of some quasi-scientific survey found in a newspaper or magazine.

In "Musical Instruments Americans Play," the two largest sections are taken up by piano and guitar, while smaller segments are occupied by organ, flute and clarinet. "Observed Shapes," shown in the form of one of Mr. Colson's deftly playful studies on paper, breaks down the various shapes in which U.F.O.'s have been reported, including disc, boomerang and cigar.

With their simple icons and lettering, faded colors and exposed nails, Mr. Colson's paintings resemble signs from the 1940's or 50's, part folk art and part low-tech commercial art. What Mr. Colson is investigating is not science, after all, but a kind of modern folklore or popular mythology. The round shape with every part perfectly fitting might signify a yearning for wholeness in a confusingly fragmented world.

Some sculptures in which small simulated street signs are joined by metal brackets along with found objects to create Cubistically jumbled wall works are not as visually snappy as the "Pie Charts," but they could lead to more expansive formal and conceptual discoveries.

KEN JOHNSON