

**Roberta Smith review – New York Times, January 5, 1990, p. C21**

It may be that the dawning of a new year makes an art dealer's fancy turn to thoughts of fresh, undiscovered talent. Whatever the reason, a number of debuts are under way this weekend, in galleries on 57<sup>th</sup> Street and in SoHo.

The most impressive debut is being made by **GREG COLSON**, another artist from Los Angeles, whose work is to go on view Tuesday at Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene Street, to run through Jan. 27. Like many members of a generation that might be called post-Neo-Geo, Mr. Colson's adamantly low-tech work is understated and ecologically conscientious, giving equal weight to concept and material and to creation and decay.

Most of his pieces are made of weathered plywood or amalgams of battered metal boxes that evoke the urban trash heap – obsolescence, neglect and expendability – while the maps and diagrams gently appended to their surfaces alternately speak of elaborate human achievement or folly.

In "High-Rise," the rusty substructure of a skyscraper is sketched onto the misty grain of a whitened square of plywood that is itself held to the wall by a piece of open metalwork; in "Newark," a section of a white-on-black street map is painted on a similar surface. Marginally more positive is "Dewey Decimals," which spells out a series of numbers on a trio of old lunch boxes more appropriate to construction workers than to librarians.

In nearly all of Mr. Colson's works, the combination of modesty and grandiosity, of mental exactness and physical imprecision adds up to an odd, sad beauty. Elliptical as they are, his pieces often seem to scrutinize the conflict between the active center and the deserted margins of industrialized society. As with the exceptional documentary "Roger and Me" – to which these works offer a highly condensed visual parallel – it's not a pretty sight.