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Art in Review

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DAVID ASKEVOLD

“Three Easy Pieces”

Canada

55 Chrystie Street, Lower East Side

David Askevold, who died in January, was a founding member of the 1970s contemporary-art scene in Halifax, Nova Scotia. (Better-known participants included the ur-Conceptualists Lawrence Weiner, Dan Graham and Lucy Lippard.) This show, planned before the artist's death, includes a series of paintings he made last year and a video from the '90s.

A set of perplexing canvases titled “Equation for a Modern Miracle” incorporates sci-fi backgrounds and Weiner-esque text: “A Cheap Novel Cover + Light Refractions ÷ Time and Space = A Modern Miracle.”

“Ampersand” reproduces a Mother Goose nursery rhyme about the proper use of this symbol, and dedicates it to President Bush and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. It is a peculiar subject for a painting, and too juvenile to be an effective political critique.

In the short video “16 Candles” (1990), a chandelier holding lighted tapers revolves to a jazz-saxophone soundtrack; eventually, the flames are snuffed out. This elegant, evocative piece bears comparison to the work of a fellow Canadian Conceptualist, Rodney Graham, and suggests that a more comprehensive look at Mr. Askevold's art is in order.