

The New York Times

Johnson, Ken. "'The Age of Small Things'." *The New York Times*, 6 Feb. 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/07/arts/design/the-age-of-small-things.html>.

The Age of Small Things

All the objects in this absorbing, cheerfully eclectic grab bag of a show have one thing and little else in common: smallness. The show presents more than 50 paintings, drawings and three-dimensional pieces from the mid-17th century to the present by 42 artists. The littlest ones are a watercolor smaller than a postage stamp picturing a human earlobe by Ellen Altfest and a gnomonic narrative in watercolor and pastel measuring just $\frac{1}{2}$ by $\frac{5}{8}$ inches by the painter Chuck Webster, who organized the show. Bigger items like a richly colored composition of simple shapes painted by Suzan Frecon and a scary clown head drawn by Chris Martin, hover between paperback and hardcover book size.

With no discernible chronological or formal program, perusing the show is like being in a mental pinball machine. So you might bounce around the gallery from a bright blue and pink painting of two nude female torsos by John Wesley to a funky sculpture of a stack of pancakes by Katherine Bradford to a geometric abstraction lovingly penciled by Myron Stout.

Numerous 20th-century boldface names are represented, including Francis Picabia, Balthus, Philip Guston, Joan Mitchell and Vija Celmins. But some of the most arresting things are by unknown 19th-century creators. They include Victorian mourning paperweights in the form of miniature books and intricate, cut-paper works representing a hand holding a heart. A blue, flower-shaped pin set on blue fabric in the shell of an old pocket watch by Joseph Cornell resonates sweetly with those romantic folk expressions.