

Saturday/Sunday, July 21-22, 2012

Pleasant Unease in the Fresh Aesthetic Air

By Peter Plagens

Joan Giordano / Spin Out: Constructions

June Kelly

166 Mercer St., (212) 226-1660

Through August 3

Ten years ago, Joan Giordano enjoyed an artist's residency in Japan. She studied papermaking and grew fond of the form of kimonos. Couple those interests, now, to an infatuation with newspapers—with such delicious names as *Corriere della Sera*, *Le Soir* and the *Plain Dealer*—and you have her current exhibition of elaborate but very grid-disciplined constructions. Although Ms. Giordano is fond of such often-overlooked masters of delicate collage as Anne Ryan and William Dole, she's much more brutal with her material—she tears holes in her corrugated-board armatures, and dries wet newspapers around heating pipes



Joan Giordano/June Kelly Gallery

Joan Giordano's 'Couriers' (2011-12), mixed media with international newspapers, at June Kelly

in her basement to form them into cylinders—and she makes works of art that measure in feet, not inches.

They are "constructions," all right, rather than mere collages: Ms. Giordano inserts rolled newspapers (she's fond of fonts in Hebrew, Arabic and Korean) through belt-loop-like sections of the corrugated board, which in

turn anchors pasted strata of those paper purveyors of news to make handsome works that hang on the wall like a Samurai's divested armor. If I have any misgivings about Ms. Giordano's constructions, it's that they are a little too can't-miss, a little too stately—too suitable for corporate offices. After all, big grids in white, brown, beige and touches of dark red, with masses of small typography, can hardly go wrong. Pretty soon, though, there may not be any more newspapers, and art such as Ms. Giordano's will serve as well-designed mementos of a bygone medium.

—Mr. Plagens is a New York-based painter and writer