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ART IN REVIEW

Gina Beavers: 'Palate'

By ROBERTA SMITH

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*Clifton Benevento
515 Broadway, near Spring Street
SoHo
Through Dec. 22*

Gina Beavers has some nerve, but needs more. For her latest paintings she has taken images of plated food from the Internet and built them into small, low reliefs with various kinds of acrylic, including paint, as well as pumice and glass beads.

"Blueberry Pie," from Gina Beavers's "Palate" show at Clifton Benevento.

The results are garish and fairly unappetizing, if not literally embalmed. What with the fruit in "Blueberry Pie" resembling little bits of tarmac, and the sugar glazing of "Brittle Cake" suggesting a kind of Formica, the pieces rarely look good enough to eat, though "Oysters at Grand Central," which evokes an extra-tactile painting by Manet, has an appealing succulence that is at once painterly and aromatic.

Ms. Beavers exaggerates and satirizes both the act of painting and the fetishization of food by professional photographers and hungry diners broadcasting images of their meals before tucking in. She also captures certain extremes of indulgence that verge on gross, like an especially bumpy rendering of a dish combining fried chicken and waffles.

Her efforts take photo appropriation into new extremes of dimensionality, but they also circle back to suggest a bulked-up version of [Photo Realism](#), for example, while relating more obliquely to the painted plaster reliefs of Claes Oldenburg and [Red Grooms](#)'s painted sculptures.

In their photo-based pictorial coherence, these new works are more conventional than some of Ms. Beavers's previous efforts, which have included jarring reliefs of female breasts painted with geometries reminiscent of [Mondrian](#), and more expressionist works involving faces and rib cages.

The current show reveals a gentler side of her sensibility but also points up the need for a fuller, more complete integration of her talents and her distinctively skeptical approaches to painting.