

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

Art | Reviews

Robert Therrien



Art

★★★★★

Gagosian Gallery, through Jun 14
(see Chelsea)

To say that Robert Therrien's new exhibition is all about scale does not diminish it. If anything, the work is so imposing that it can easily deflect mere words. The show's highlight is a series of enormous folding tables and chairs arranged throughout the rear gallery. Therrien doesn't go in for half measures: The tables are eight feet tall, high enough that you can walk beneath them like you're suddenly in a land of giants. The details are exactly right, from the upholstered surface of the table to the rusting hinges of the chairs. You don't worry too much about specifics, though; you're too busy adapting to your place in a new world, discovering shifts in proportion so stark and unexpected that they become almost joyful. What might strike you as a gimmick becomes a transformative experience as you enter an oversize universe where you don't belong but don't want to leave, either.

Other large works of gargantuan stacked pastel-colored dishes don't have quite the same drama, but as you walk around them the light reflects off their plastic surface, and you could swear they were turning in place right beside you. Therrien is attracted to the everyday—there are piles of metal pots and pans from the miniature to the huge that look as though they're waiting to be cleaned. At his best, the artist proves that the banal and the extraordinary don't have to be mutually exclusive.

—David Coggins