

Art People | Douglas C. McGill

Collaborators depict nature.

WANDERERS in lower Manhattan's cultural dens — through some of the newer art galleries and alternative exhibition spaces in particular — have in recent years increasingly encountered the unusual work of the collaborative team Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel.

Their art is not always easy to find. Last year, for instance, many passers-by hardly noticed the window of an unremarkable factory building in Little Italy. A peek through the window, however, revealed a room of apparently limitless depth, filled with such things as a waterfall, a steaming volcano, sparks in the air and a swirling dust cloud that resembled the Milky Way.

The team has installed similar works at such new-art spots as the Clocktower, the Anchorage in Brooklyn and the Philip Morris branch of the Whitney Museum. Their newest work can be seen at the Art Galaxy gallery, 282 Mott Street, just south of Houston Street, through Jan. 24.

In this piece, a 27-foot scrim covers the one open side of a room resembling a striped but otherwise bare-walled vault. Inside is an abstract tableau: two giant fans spin at opposite ends of the room, in which a stream of water falls from the ceiling into a reflecting pool; a nine-foot compass needle floats in the wind, and a hovering copper ball spins at knee level with no obvious means of support.

What's it all about? In a recent interview, Ms. Jones and Mr. Ginzel explained that their work — whose effects are usually achieved through cleverly hidden motors, pumps, lamps and fans — is like a metaphor for weather, both meteorological and emotional. As for the sparks, steam, spinning globes and floating needles, perhaps they are whatever lives and tries to survive in such weather.

Mr. Ginzel, a former assistant to the artists Alice Aycock and Red Grooms, and Ms. Jones, who formerly made architectural models for the architect I. M. Pei, began to collaborate five years ago. The cramped

conditions of life in Manhattan, they say, have played a role in the development of their work.

"Living in this city in some way intensifies our reverence for the natural world," said Ms. Jones. "We're so starved for nature. We forget there is such a thing as a horizon, or a landscape. Very few people know that if you boil bones, you have a wonderful broth. Where does soup come from in this America?"

"In this piece, we wanted to make a landscape and a storm," Ms. Jones added. "We wanted to say, 'This is not all that exists, here in New York City. There are boats that are swallowed up by waves, people who disappear in cyclones.' The work comes from our awareness of ourselves as alive and the world in flux as alive."



The New York Times/Jack Manning

Andrew Ginzel, left, and Kristin Jones with their newest installation, at the Art Galaxy gallery.