



YVON LAMBERT

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# The New York Times

WEEKEND **Arts** FINE ARTS  
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## Art in Review

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2008

### Kay Rosen

Scareful!

Yvon Lambert  
550 West 21st Street, Chelsea  
Through Jan. 3

No Noose Is Good Noose

Alexander Gray Associates  
526 West 26th Street, Chelsea  
Through Jan. 10

Kay Rosen first hit her stride during the Reagan years, when theory was in vogue, and artists like Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer were exploring the relationship of language and power. Her latest word paintings, which range from small, Ed Ruscha-esque witticisms to sprawling, enigmatic wall paintings in the mold of Lawrence Weiner, make a case for the continued relevance of text-based art.

"Removal From Office," a billboard-size wall painting in which the last four letters of "REMOVAL" have been italicized, makes a bold statement in the main gallery at Yvon Lambert. The political inspiration is obvious, but Ms. Rosen achieves a kind of linguistic catharsis.

Smaller paintings, in enamel sign paint on canvas, make up the rest of the show. The word "OVERBITE" has an exaggerated "V"; the first six letters of "PEACOCK" are stacked, three at a time, on the final "K," so that they resemble a fan of feathers.

Other works rely on subtler textual clues; for example, the puzzlelike arrangement of the letters of the word "INSTINCT."

In the front gallery, which is visible from the street, Ms. Rosen places the word "CANTILEVER" and a witty anagram on adjacent walls. The title, "Justified," refers to the typography but also hints at a psychological reading.

Ms. Rosen's installation "No Noose Is Good Noose" (1983), at Alexander Gray, riffs on the children's game Hangman. Combining diagrams, stick figures and revolutionary language, it looks dated and didactic compared with the newer, more playful word paintings.

KAREN ROSENBERG