

PETER DAYTON

Glenn Horowitz Bookseller, 87 Newtown Lane,
East Hampton. Through Jan. 22. (631) 324-5511

Merging strategies of collage and appropriation, Mr. Dayton's compelling new canvases use farm seed catalog images to create disarmingly witty comments on commercial printing and reproduction processes.

Visually dazzling, these high-impact onions, scallions, peppers and potatoes become boldly colored shapes that are frequently tumbling forms thrust against the picture plane.

Mr. Dayton, an East Hampton resident whose most recent New York City exhibitions have focused on transformations of flower reproductions, enlarges the vegetables before cutting and pasting them into seamless collages. These increases in scale also increase the dosage and intensity of the strong colors and toy with principles of optical saturation.

Considerable emphasis is placed on the technical aspects of commercial imaging. Reverse printing might turn sliced onions into strange blue discs, for example, and backgrounds might shift between the pale and the psychedelic. Manipulations might suddenly eliminate color, underscore artifice and the way things are removed from reality.

This concept of disconnecting is readily noted in large pieces in the second-floor gallery. Primarily all-over schemes based on flower illustrations in seed catalogs, these are canvases that include the gray dot grids of a magnified ben-day screen. At times, the sudden absence of color inserts a dreamlike quality.

Everything, and especially the vegetables series, comments on artifice and on the way commercially processed images remove their subjects from reality. The vegetables seem to be more about signifiers, or emblems, than about food.



"Untitled," above, by Peter Dayton, at Glenn Horowitz Bookseller.

A great deal of posturing is occurring too, with a drapery or a ready-to-eat salad attempting to enhance the presentation of a product. Mr. Dayton builds on this for his own purposes.

In what seems to be an expansion of content, a number of the new pieces also test conceptual issues by including words originally intended to get attention on a catalog page as they announce a particular potato to be new, or a certain corn seed to be in limited supply. Highlighted in this altered context, the proclamations become more complex messages that might deal with adjustments to the food chain.