

# Art

## Multiple moods emerge in collage works

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INQUIRER ART CRITIC

**C**ollage painting — embedding things such as photographs, bits of text and real-world objects in a matrix of brushed pigment — is a common strategy. Yet even when two artists adopt a similar approach, the results can differ markedly.

This is apparent in exhibitions of mixed-media works by Kate Davis at Bridgette Mayer Gallery and Richard J. Watson at Artjaz Gallery. Both artists rely heavily on found materials to suggest narratives and trigger memories, but create different moods.

Davis is the more oblique. Her paintings and smaller works on paper, which begin as monoprints, present combinations of images designed to nudge viewers into reverie.

For instance, the painting *Swingers* repeats a photograph of a child on a carnival ride. It's an innocent image that Davis transforms into something slightly menacing.

*Crown of Feathers* is built around a photograph of a man wearing a hat whose broad brim is decorated with feathers. This suggests a rural folksiness, innocence and playfulness.

Each of Davis' works is thematic, but the themes are subliminal rather than overt. Elusiveness isn't a problem, though, because the paintings satisfy completely as formal, painterly combinations.

Davis has developed the ability to blend lots of pieces into seamless, coherent



**Kate Davis' collage painting "Swingers"** turns an innocent image, of a child on a carnival ride, into something slightly menacing. Her show is at the Bridgette Mayer Gallery on Walnut Street.

wholes. She chooses and positions carefully, so that every part feels intrinsic and nothing looks gratuitously stuck on. This is a major achievement for a painter three years short of 30.