

sketches

by Roberta Fallon

Breath of Life

Rebecca Rutstein's new paintings at **Bridgette Mayer** parade the life aquatic, geographic and geologic with colors that run from bubblegum to pewter, and delicate maplike lines and shapes that suggest a world adrift. With their overlapping layers of appropriated graphing and decorative imagery on small and medium-sized panels, rutstein's dreamy paintings have the feel of computer games designed by Rand McNally. I wanted to push a button and animate them. While geography is the ostensible subject, the works are metaphorical. They're really about the seismic interactions between people-something made crystal clear in her new video 21 Earthquakes. The video-made, as were the paintings, while the artist was on a residency in Hawaii-shows the artist's hand drawing seismic data lines as if she's a human measuring tool. The audio merges the slow rumble of earthquake activity with the slow breathing of the artist at work drawing. It's a perfect accompaniment to the paintings, and a great reading on human interplay and the threats lurking beneath the surface. (R.F.)



Plate tectonics: Acrylic panels such as Catawampus suggest a world adrift.

"Rebecca Rutstein: Ebb and Flow," through Nov. 26. Bridgette Mayer Gallery, 709 Walnut St., first fl. 215.413.8893. www.mayerartconsultants.com