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GALLERIES

BY MARK JENKINS

REX WEIL

The most elaborate piece in Rex Weil's "Ripography: Works with Paper" pins hundreds of vertical shreds to the wall of the D.C. Arts Center's gallery. The other works are simpler, but all cut (or rather, torn) from the same cloth (that is, paper). The individual tatters are often too small for their sources to be identified, but the repurposed images depict clothing, appliances, houses, labels, food and pets. Clearly, these are scraps from catalogues and other shop-till-you-drop literature.

Occasionally, the District artist will provide a stronger cue. "Ripography

(tiffany chains)" is a cluster of paper-loop bracelets derived from a catalogue meant to sell jewelry made of more expensive materials. The show's commentary on upscale consumer culture is mostly indirect, however. Anything but excessive, most of the collages consist of just a few small bits of colored paper, arranged simply on white space framed by black expanses. Rather than echo the blare of 1960s pop art, these modest rip-ups suggest some of the gentler works of the cubist era. Weil braved the hubbub of the luxury-goods marketplace only to come out the other side with art that's unusually quiet. Think of "Ripography" as a Zen garden of earthly delights.