

Ollman, Leah, "Plays on text, canvas," *Los Angeles Times*, October 20, 2012 (in-print).

D4 SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2012

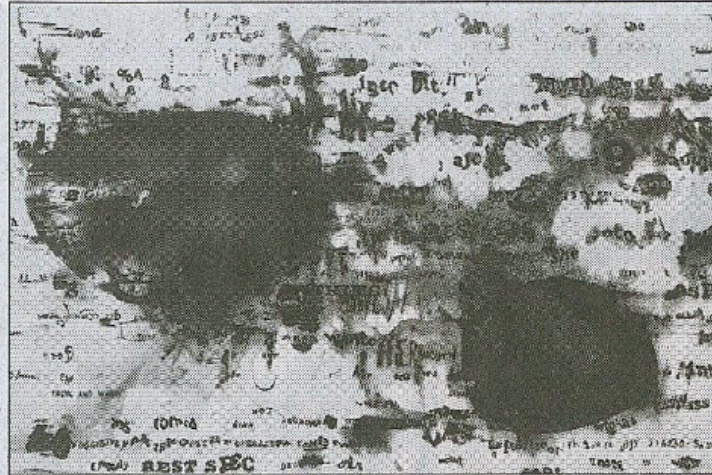
Los Angeles Times

AROUND
THE GALLERIES

Plays on text, canvas

BY LEAH OLLMAN

Diego Singh's first L.A. show is a mixed bag of mixed messages. The Miami-based Argentine artist has titled every work with a single ampersand, though there are two distinct series of paintings on view. One riffs on the use of CAPTCHAs, those word-like strings of letters and punctuation marks that



Various Small Fires

DIEGO SINGH'S "&" series at Various Small Fires riffs on dialogue and the Web in his first L.A. show.

you often have to enter when conducting transactions online, to prove that an actual human is at the keyboard.

Singh adopts the visual idiom of the CAPTCHA — woozy letters, mixed fonts — and fills canvases with semi-

legible phrases ("taste and waste," "her mouth," "Anna Wintour") and invented dialogues. The conflation of image and text makes for a kind of concrete poetry but one that resonates on only the most superficial level.

There's more to chew on in the press release, which describes these paintings as "teas(ing) out the absurdity of the anti-subjective assertion of the text in Conceptual Art."

Singh's other series is more satisfying, both visually and conceptually. Most of the canvases had already been painted and in some cases exhibited before Singh reclaimed them and reworked them so they now look like stretched lengths of well-worn denim, meticulously detailed with wrinkles and rips. Abstract passages of color and line share the surface with the trompe l'oeil illusionism, the two painterly languages not clashing with any real force but at least generating some mild friction.

Various Small Fires, 1212 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice,