

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Smith, Roberta, "Art Reviews," *The New York Times*, February 11, 1994

February 11, 1994 **Art in Review**

By ROBERTA SMITH

Jim Hodges CRG Art Incorporated 16 East 71st Street Manhattan Through Feb. 26

Jim Hodges's wistful gallery debut reflects the current fascination with an ephemeral, implicitly mournful art, and also with artwork that is extended and seemingly encyclopedic. The centerpiece is "A Diary of Flowers," made up of 565 drawings of flowers, perhaps nature's frailest creations, each executed on one of society's most prevalent throwaways, the paper napkin, and simply pinned to the wall. Subject, material and mode of presentation are well suited to one another.

Crumpled and stained, redolent of the city's coffee shops, the napkins are themselves wilted. In contrast, the flowers seem preserved as if by pressing, and attest to their enduring presence in art, science, ritual and everyday life. Rendered in ink in a variety of moods and modes, and often in a surprisingly commanding manner, they are as engaging when taken one at time as when viewed as a single field of blooms.

The remaining works in the show -- including a spider's web made of delicate silver chain, and a small wall piece made of silk and plastic flowers titled "Not Here" -- are consistent with Mr. Hodges's poetic sensibility, but their impression is not as lasting. ROBERTA SMITH