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GALLERIES | LAST CHANCE

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HELEN MIRRA

*Through Saturday. Peter Freeman,
140 Grand Street, Manhattan;
212-966-5154, peterfreemaninc.com.*

Helen Mirra's marvelous SoHo show of small, vibrant weavings, "Bones Are Spaces," rebalances the visual and intellectual elements of her work. For over two decades, Ms. Mirra has imbued her modest, low-lying sculptures and wall pieces — handmade from found materials, dissected objects and borrowed texts — with complex reverberations of literature, history and philosophy. At times, these complexities have remained obscure unless clarified by the gallery's news release, making the work feel hermetic and precious.

The 24 weavings here were made on a hand loom, using linen and wool and sometimes silk. They progress from pieces rarely more than 12 inches on a side, which are dominated by various shapes against contrasting backgrounds, to larger works in more muted yet sumptuous monochromes. In these, the complexities are right on the surface: in subtle shifts in texture, tonality and the tightness of the weave; hints of shapes and grids; and other variations. All is in flux, depending on your distance from the works or where you place your attention. The title's reference to the intricate interiors of bones — which combine hollow and solid, hard and soft — seems apt.

Ms. Mirra has linked her work to her devotion to walking in nature, and the connection seems especially close here. Weaving is a linear activity with a cumulative effect. These weavings can also be seen as reliefs, paintings and texts, especially those that teem with surface incident.

Perhaps most telling is the news release that has been, it says, "intentionally left blank." To Ms. Mirra's credit, we are on our own.

ROBERTA SMITH



VIA PETER FREEMAN INC., NEW YORK/PARIS