

THE BOSTON GLOBE

Arts & Reviews

THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2007

Flora and Fauna:

Wendy Edwards,

Heidi Johnson, Ben Snead

At: OH+T Gallery, 450 Harrison Ave.,

through June 23, 617-423-1677,

ohtgallery.com

Natural flare

You can almost hear the frogs croaking and birds singing in "Flora and Fauna," a group show at OH+T Gallery that seems at once tidy and overgrown. The installation is spare; the paintings burst with nature's threat (and sometimes culture's, too). Heidi Johnson jam-packs her paintings with references to both. "Currier, Stubbs, Audubon" has brilliant tropical fish (courtesy of 18th-century illustrator George Stubbs) and delicately patterned birds (Audubon) filling the foreground, while a snowy scene from Currier and Ives makes a romantic background, with a VW Beetle thrown in to bring us up to the 21st century. It's a hodgepodge that feels at once festive and foreboding.

Ben Snead's paintings are more orderly, but still tinged with fear. In "Poison Connection" he makes a simple pattern out of several brightly colored poisonous frogs. Against a yellow ground, they make up a kind of mandala or hex sign. Abstract painter Wendy Edwards drizzles skeins of paint, making floating nets. In "Wake Up," she uses shades of blue on orange, with happy daisy shapes appearing in gaps. It's sweet, but not as complex or engaging as her other piece here, "Pocket," in which she layers the nets — but "Pocket" doesn't really fit the nature theme.

