

GUSTAVO GODOY
The Happy Lion

IF VIEWERS at The Happy Lion are any indication, members of the art crowd are as happy to indulge the temptation to touch art as a seven-year-old. And artist Gustavo Godoy doesn't stop at inviting a curious finger to poke at his installation, "What's the Big Idea?," a carefully constructed sculpture-meets-playground. The audience can climb up a ramp

fastidious. It's hard to conceive of this balance as perilous; instead it resembles the space, both literal and metaphoric, of art making, where the process vacillates between coming together and falling apart in a cycle that builds upon itself.

The most successful elements of this multifaceted installation are the two larger pieces in the center, blooming wooden flowers connected by climbing ramps lined with rubber tread. A walk to the top puts viewers in the unlikely, and perhaps unwanted, position of center stage, offering a view of a mini-landscape of angles tipped with bits of color. Stooping to peer inside these constructions reveals progressively intricate structures resembling a toy city, or the looking-glass of a creative process. Godoy is at his most interesting when he plays with perception in this way and his use of industrial materials, from two-by-fours to a near manic manipulation of a nail gun, serve his ends in the construction of this fort-like metaphor. Though less intriguing are pieces where materials seem to be used for their own sake; two cement sculptures feel heavy and inert while the neon tubing on an empty sign too literally points to the process of building. "What's the Big Idea?" offers up a rare cocktail of levity and reflection.

—Annie Buckley



Gustavo Godoy, "What's the Big Idea?" 2007, installation view

to view paintings at close range or wander up a side route to an improvised stage at the center of this happily cacophonous installation. Godoy takes off the white gloves to tackle what is, if not a new issue, still an important one: the notion of gallery as sacred space and art as precious object. His fresh take on the issue invites climbing and smiles while playfully prodding the art world's tendency to take itself a bit too seriously.

For his first solo show in Los Angeles, (he was included previously in group exhibitions at Gagosian Gallery and the Schindler House), Godoy created the works from industrial materials. With cast-off two-by-fours and strips of rubber, neon tubes and carefully placed daubs of red, blue, and black house paint — not to mention a whole lot of nails — Godoy has made a curious monument, ostensibly to abstraction but ultimately in celebration of the complicated, obsessive and joyful process of making art. The majority of the gallery is taken up by large sculptures that hover somewhere between construction and destruction. The pieces jut out at angles that could be called violent, were the effect not so lighthearted and the assembly so

