

MARTOS GALLERY

# The New York Times

## ART IN REVIEW; *Rafael Sánchez -- 'Balloons Umbrellas Turntables'*

By ROBERTA SMITH OCT. 1, 2004

Participant 95 Rivington Street, Lower East Side Through Oct. 10



*Weather Station, 2004*

Rafael Sánchez, a Cuban-born artist who lives in New York, is known primarily for surreal, shape-shifting performances, one of which recounted Aeschylus' "Libation Bearers" to the tunes (lip-synched) of the rock band Queen. Mr. Sánchez's first New York gallery exhibition confirms a sensibility both refined and antic whose heroes might include Jean Cocteau and George Brecht.

He migrates effortlessly among mediums and disciplines: from paintings, to drawings, to sculptures, to a small stage set that he will use for performances during the show's closing weekend. The props, effects and narratives of theater recur in images of curtains, balloons and umbrellas, while sculptures use revolving turntables to imbue some of these same objects with an eerie half-life.

Mr. Sánchez's paintings depict enigmatic encounters among figures, heads or objects, in a palette whose unusually saturated, tactile colors turn out to be foundation makeup, driveway sealer, chroma-key blue, gold leaf and nail polish masquerading as pigment. Again and again, Mr. Sánchez modestly but tellingly coaxes something magical out of almost nothing.

ROBERTA SMITH