

Weekend

Arts & Performance

THE BOSTON GLOBE FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2002

Group show at Kingston has range, substance

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For gallerygoers, summer is a time for browsing through group shows. The Kingston Gallery stages a juried show, put together by independent curator Lelia Amalfitano. She culled 600 slides to assemble a strong and wide-ranging exhibition of a mere 17 works.

Amalfitano gives two pieces her "Best of Show" nod. Michelle Samour's "Sampling" conflates art and science and utilizes the modernist grid to explore the more subtle systems of living organisms. Samour puts paper pulp in squeeze bottles to draw on Plexiglas plates. She wedges each drawing between two such plates to form what look like giant microscope slides. Then she mounts them on brackets in a grid pattern on the wall, implying that you could shuffle them at will, depending on what sense you're trying to make of the world. It's a beautiful installation, and the strong conceptual underpinnings turn it into something challenging and deep.

The other prize goes to photographer William Armstrong, whose untitled color photo appears to pulsate off the wall. Armstrong works with brilliant color and blurred focus. He creates forms that seem familiar; here, it's a figure in a yellow shirt with a black shadow for a head. But this is no portrait. It's a color system, and it's abstraction that incidentally implies portraiture. The line between figuration and abstraction is not an easy one to walk, and Armstrong pulls it off.

Other high points in the show include Maureen Albano's drawing with milk, wine, and hair, all of which make different uncontrolled marks on the

GALLERIES, Page D18



William Armstrong's untitled photo at the Kingston Gallery blurs abstraction's boundaries.