

# ARTFORUM

## Mie Olise Kjærgaard

BARBARA DAVIS GALLERY

4411 Montrose

July 12 - August 9

Mie Olise Kjærgaard is interested in utopian structures long since undermined by the problems that beset all visionary endeavors. Her paintings and installations are not, however, full of apocalyptic doom and gloom, but rather are hopeful; they are filled with visual ruminations that possess a unique beauty. Kjærgaard's source material for this exhibition, titled "Penetrating Pores of Construction," is based on a trek she made to the North Pole to research the abandoned Soviet-era coal-mining town nicknamed the Pyramid. This architectural relic has proven to be an aesthetic and conceptual inspiration. Kjærgaard loosely interprets the town in her paintings, as befits her technique; the idea seems to be to capture the structures and layout of the place in her mind and then extrapolate a parallel universe in the gallery.

The paintings are large and handled with confidence. Her use of paint reminds one of David Park in that she has the rare ability to evoke a multitude of surfaces, all contrasted with a harsh light, with a few well-placed, luscious strokes. Some of the paintings depict the dilapidated structures reconfigured on stilts to create a sense of vertigo. Others offer ships looming in the sky as if on some forgotten fantastic voyage of yesterday. Her installation *Penetrating Inbetween*, 2008, is a life-size ensemble of found wooden planks that form what might be interpreted as a makeshift coal mine. As in the paintings, there is a longing tone in the work that inspires a humanistic appreciation of otherwise abandoned environments.



- Garland Fielder

*On Sticks with Pineapples*, 2008, acrylic and polymer on canvas, 90" x 84".