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Climbing (Bromm, 90 West Broadway at Chambers Street): The word was in olden times that when artists settled in the slums, the real estate people couldn't be far behind. In the Lower East Side, the two camps seemed to have arrived in force simultaneously, along with galleries. Rushed, so to speak, to TriBeCa, this sampling of new local talent is subtitled, naturally, the East Village. A couple of the roughly 25 exhibitors have already appeared north of 14th Street, notably Mike Bidlo, the professional plagiarist who has evidently switched from Jackson Pollock to Andy Warhol; Rebecca Howland, who offers a painted sculpture of an octopus devouring Manhattan, and the inevitable Keith Haring. Mark Kostabi is another familiar name, whose not bad black and white painting is of a headless creature reaching across a store counter for its missing part. The rest is a mixture of ghoulishness, such as Debby Davis's pigs' heads on spikes, and jaunty junk, such as Arch Connelly's neo-Mia Westlerlund sculpture of pinnacles adorned with pearls, that is only partly redeemed by the sincerity of Martin Wong's brick-by-brick painting of Stanton Street slums at night. (Through Feb. 4) **VIVIEN RAYNOR**

HAL BROMM

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