

reviews: [new york](#)

Max Ferguson

Gallery Henoeh

There were two sides-literally-to Max Ferguson's meticulously rendered and thoughtfully composed paintings here. One side presented scenes of New York that are becoming ever rarer: clock-repair shops, empty Laundromats, cobblers and tailors at work, and used book stores-actual stores, not virtual ones. The reverse surface of each panel was chock-full of the artist's handwritten

thoughts that occurred during the months Ferguson labored over the particular work.

The artist invites us to step up close and share his delight in detail. And when we do, the complicated little pictures fill our field of vision. The 12-inch-square *Pageant Books* (2009) depicts an elegant blond reader who is surrounded by books. They cover every available inch of shelf space, while more tomes fill

cardboard boxes that are stacked on the floor. The woman stands reflectively in the middle of an organized world that teeters on the edge of chaos. Attired in a long black coat, she holds a book in her white-gloved hands. A sign above her suggests that the book may have been chosen from the Judaica section, which is adjacent to



Max Ferguson, *Laundromat*, 2006, oil on canvas, 9" x 12". Gallery Henoeh.

epigrams and autobiographical musings, scrawled alongside souvenir snippets and Max Ferguson, *Laundromat*, 2008, oil on canvas, 9" x 12". Gallery Henoeh. occasional snapshots, One entry on the back of *Katz's*, 7A.M. (2009) asks, "Why do I live in my head? Because the rent is cheap, and I enjoy the view." Another confesses, "Just messages in a bottle; that's all." Yet another proclaims, "G-d paused a moment to ponder the concept of the finite." Collectively, the ephemera and bon mots from a diary of events and

the science fiction and mysteries shelves. The edges of things are so slightly. Some viewers of these works might be led to consider how the human eye sees, or how things look through the ground glass of a camera's lens. Others might muse, "So many books, so little time!"

-Gerard Haggerty