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AROUND THE GALLERIES

Amid the celestial strands

By HOLLY MYERS
Special to The Times

With its concrete floor, high ceiling and tall windows facing a bustling stretch of Main Street downtown, the front room at Bank would be a handsome space no matter what sort of artwork the gallery happened to be exhibiting. The site-specific installation you'll find there now, however — **Fran Siegel's** "Daylight Savings" — is so attentive to its character, so delicately calibrated to its charms and so beautiful that it elevates the space altogether, inspiring a whole new level of appreciation.

Made with more than 400 strands of multicolored monofilament that are suspended above the length of the space and dotted with small cones of either transparent or reflective Mylar, the work fills the upper regions of the gallery like a thin, silvery cloud. Each strand begins at the center of a single square in a large grid taped to the window above the gallery door. Some of these strands stretch to the opposite wall, ending in an even line just above another doorway; the others fan haphazardly across the adjacent wall. Some are taut; others ripple softly.



The point at which each strand attaches to the white wall is marked with a silver cone on a short, bowed stem. These forms — something like a forest of tiny desk lamps — cast intricate and ever-shifting patterns of shadow across the wall. Look closer and you'll find these actual shadows mingling with faint graphite markings recording the position of other shadows at different times of the day. Thrown into this mélange are a handful of small, round mirrors mounted flat on the wall, each accompanied by a Mylar disk suspended like a flower blossom on a short piece of wire.

Like the best site-specific work, the piece is an ode to the room: a celebration of its vaulted ceiling and tall windows and of the warm Southern Californian light they collect. It gathers this light like a dewy, three-dimensional spider web, tossing it playfully from strand to strand and animating the typically neglected space above the viewer's head.

Several smaller works in the back two rooms of the gallery reveal a similar degree of elegance across a variety of media. One, an installation called "Dispersion" — consisting of 47 small, roughly hewn porcelain cones mounted like so many miniature megaphones across two adjacent walls — feels as gentle and earthy as "Daylight Savings" feels sharp and ethereal.

Another, "Force Field," is a large, beautiful drawing resembling a topographical map in which Siegel has employed an eccentric array of media and techniques — pencil, ink, airbrush, cutouts, bas-relief — to a singularly graceful effect. At the heart of each is an impressively sensitive approach to materials and an exceedingly delicate hand.

Bank, 400 S. Main St., Los Angeles, (213) 621-4055, through May 21. Closed Sundays and Mondays.