

# TimeOut New York

## Janet Pihlblad

**P.P.O.W., through Dec 20**

If you're at all like me, you probably take P.P.O.W. for granted. Even with its spiffy new Broome Street digs, this gallery's longevity and quiriness probably work against it in the flavor-of-the-month sweepstakes. Little of what's been shown here has turned up on art-mag covers, for instance. But after years of exhibiting solid, low-key work, P.P.O.W. has become one of the New York art world's treasures. The current show of Tom Knechtel and Janet Pihlblad is a perfect case in point.

Knechtel and Pihlblad are two artists who raise my pulse, though I wouldn't claim that either's work is especially timely or (to use an increasingly outmoded term) "critical."

Janet Pihlblad is an artist's artist whose explorations of nature as an inspiration for literature have popped up intermittently over the past decade. Her work resembles that of Scottish artist Ian Hamilton Finley, though it's nowhere near as eccentric or inaccessible. In this, her most fully realized installation to date, she creates a garden of footprints carved in alabaster and a silhouette of a generic figure cut into the wall—filled, respectively, with assorted tiny plants and moss. Pihlblad reminds us that in the attempt to understand our lives, there is as much to be discovered in Central Park as on the Web, on MTV or in the Helmut Lang boutique.

So next time you're gallery-hopping in Soho, drop by P.P.O.W. After having been hectorred by all of those "important" shows you've read about, you'll find it a refreshing pit stop.—*Bill Arning*