

# ARTFORUM

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## Amanda Curreri

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*09.07.07-10.12.07 Ping Pong Gallery*

By titling her solo exhibition after a classic campfire song, "Make New Friends," Amanda Curreri dares to swirl nerdy "Kumbaya" togetherness with sculpture and socially engaged art. The results are cryptic and sweet, depending on the number of viewers milling about the intimate venue—the more the merrier. At the entrance to the show, Curreri has constructed a gateway of thrift store–scavenged mirrors attached to an open wall of primary-colored two-by-fours: One must quite literally pass through the looking glass to see the show. The artist delineates the gallery space as a spare, sanctioned zone that subtly reframes our perceptions of objects and interpersonal interactions. On view are multiple vintage record players, of the portable 1970s type with built-in plastic clamshell case; two of them are fitted with tall, seemingly rickety legs. The turntables spin, but their arms hover just above the records; the titular song, in fact, plays beneath a plywood platform, at a low volume, an almost subliminal invitation for viewers to join hands and sing along. The lyrics—"Make new friends / But keep the old / One is silver / The other gold"—here function as an invitation to and guiding text for action and object-making. Five cast-plaster versions of the phonographs are leafed in either silver or gold, depending on which notable person they're dedicated to: Such dissimilar yet equally inspirational figures as Gilda Radner and Emma Goldman are granted the precious metal suggested by their names. The opposite wall features documentation of a cross-cultural exchange project in which Curreri offered vibrantly pink MAKE NEW FRIENDS T-shirts to passersby on a street corner in Seoul. Snapshots show the beaming artist with similarly pleased shirt recipients. The sincere scout's-honor invitation to engage is somewhat tempered by the minimal installation and gallery setting, but Curreri's attempt at aligning these divergent elements is an appealingly original—not to mention ambitious—impulse.