What to make of chaos

Pope.L's work can be funny, deep, and irresolvable.

It's a messy, deep, funny piece. He borrows iconography from his Harvard show, which revolved around the Le Corbusier-designed Carpenter Center at Harvard, where he had an exhibit.

You can see it, as well, in works such as "Failure Drawing #401 Two Ice Bergs One Rocket," a sketch on a movie schedule that, in addition to the titular images, roils with puns, such as coffee stains and glue.

The artist's use of color in text pieces, such as "In The Wind," a white-on-white work quoting Malcolm X — "By any means necessary" — cleverly both underlines and subverts the words' meanings. Other works are misfires: For "Trophy (Puppy)," he smothered a stuffed animal in peanut butter and mounted it on a plaque on the wall, where it looks like a distasteful glob.

William Pope.L.
Color Isn't Matter
At: Samson, 450 Harrison Ave., through March 20.
617-357-7177,
www.samsonprojects.com

Traces & Places

Side by Side:
John Guthrie/Isabel Riley
At: 808 Gallery, Boston University, 808 Commonwealth Ave., through March 26.
617-353-3371,
www.bu.edu/cfa/visual-arts