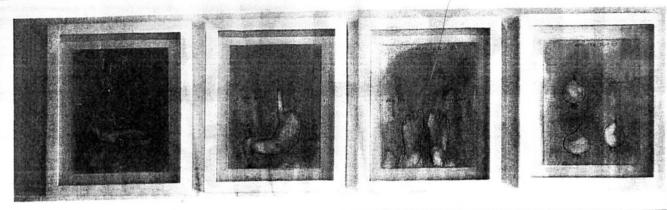
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ART REVIEW

The Oil Stain Is Not Part Of the Exhibit

By BENJAMIN GENOCCHIO

N Jersey City Heights, where Margaret Murphy lives, the nearest art institution is the Jersey City Museum, on the other side of town. Galleries are few and far between in her neighborhood. Mostly, it's work-

leries are few and far between in her neighborhood. Mostly, it's working class homes, dollar stores, pizza joints and Hispanic restaurants.

It seems fitting, sort of, that Ms. Murphy, an artist, should establish the neighborhood's first art gallery in a garage. She has spent her own money doing it up, helped by a grant from Pro Arts, a Jersey City arts group. The gallery, it goes without saying, is rough at the edges.

Ms. Murphy is not the first artist to start an art gallery in her home, studio or garage. It is actually something of an art world tradition, even a rite of passage for newcomers determined to find places to display their art. You can only admire the artists' grit and spirit.

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The inaugural exhibition here at the Garage, as the gallery is known, is "Girl Talk," a five-woman show of artists from New York and New Jersey. It explores "the question of what artists who just happen to be girls

sey. It explores "the question of what artists who just mapped to get talk about," according to the gallery's press release.

"The exhibition was really about getting together the work of a group of young women artists 1 thought was strong and interesting," Ms. Mur-phy said one recent afternoon in her newly refurbished gallery. Tempera-tures inside the garage that day were well below freezing.

Few of the artists make work specific to gender. Dahlia Elsayed, for instance, makes thoughtful, intensely personal diagram-like drawings of her thoughts and feelings, much of which has to do with her own relationship problems and personal anxieties.

Bethany Bristow creates blobby sculptures out of melted bottles, feathers and corn syrup, which she litters about the gallery floor like runny dog droppings or messy road kill. Formless and shallow, with a nailpolish gloss, they sort of attract and repulse you at the same time.

Lynn Mullins presents a three-minute video showing the artist sticklike builting onto a painted blue backding and then bunching

Lynn munins presents a infeedimente video snowing the artist stick-bits of cotton batting onto a painted blue backdrop hed then bunching women's sports trophies in the foreground. The video boffles, taking you on a journey of sorts rather than delivering a message to peaning.

Diana Jensen loves portraiture. She has cut out, blown up and painted



individual faces from group photographs, which are then rearranged. It is like looking at people in a crowd through a telescope

Ms. Murphy plans to organize other group exhibitions of young and under-recognized artists. She is also accepting ideas from outside curators. So far she is only open weekends. But one thing, she says, is sure: "There will be no more shows in the dead of winter."

"Girl Talk" is at the Garage, 273 Hancock Avenue, Jersey City, through March 19. Gallery hours: Saturday and Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment. Information: (201) 993-9561.

Margaret M recently ope an art galler Jersey City rage. The fir show there, Talk," inclu work by Da Elsayed, top