

Fluid Drive: In a clever, witty show at Sue Spaid Fine Arts, **Jacqui Den Hartog's** new work swamps plaster figurines in poured puddles of synthetically colored plastic. Called "Fluid Dynamics," it's a materially based effort to jump-start critical imagination.

The poured puddles are reminiscent of the 1969 sculptures Lynda Benglis made by pouring multicolored streams of polyurethane directly onto the floor. The floor mats deftly mocked the vaunted heroism of New York School painting.

Den Hartog's sculptures play with the romantic dreaminess of much image-based painting of the past decade. She plants a pair of plaster castles into one, turning the puddled color into an evocation of the Rhine River or an Alpine lake. And, a plaster pair of pants, crumpled down around ankles provided by some plaster sneakers, transforms another puddle into a scatological accident.

So much for artworld clichés of Teutonic misogyny and bad-boy posturing. Hampered only by a certain narrowness of range, Den Hartog stakes out provocative territory.

■ *Sue Spaid Fine Art, 7454½ Beverly Blvd., (213) 935-6153, through Sunday.*