
Anne Chu, Byron Kim, Kiki Smith

AC Project Room

15 Renwick Street, near Canal Street

South Village

Through Feb. 28

Group shows of known artists aren't usually long on new data, so this exception is a nice bonus. As in his last solo show, Byron Kim takes to the wall, and the landscape, with "Mirage (for Lisa)," a drawing of long, feathery bands of blue gouache, a lighter shade hovering above a darker one at eye level. Sometimes they look flat, like a Color Field installation piece; sometimes they open inward like a vast Western plain or slab of ocean.

Kiki Smith takes her wispy drawing style into three dimensions with two recent sculptures of deer. Actually, they're Styrofoam taxidermic mannequins (ready-mades) whose bodies she has covered with paper and then drawn with swirls of delicate fur and whose antlers she has papered with silver leaf. It's great to see Ms. Smith make sculpture without going bronze.

But the best effort here is made by Anne Chu, a young sculptor known for bulky renditions of bears and bear heads. Here she works from art, not nature, making her own versions of Chinese figurative sculptures, especially the glazed ceramic figurines of court ladies, warriors and goddesses of the early Tang Dynasty.

Improvisationally carved and painted in wood, these two-foot-high sculptures echo the expressions, gestures and garments of their sources with telling yet parodistic accuracy. Everything seems just a little twisted, in a caricatural, rubbery way that grants the surfaces, irregularly gouged and beautifully dappled with color, full participation. German Expressionist sculpture may have also provided guidance with these works, which raise Ms. Chu's game several notches.

ROBERTA SMITH