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Art in Review

By THE NEW YORK TIMES

ARTS OF PACIFIC ASIA SHOW

7W New York, 11th floor

7 West 34th Street

Manhattan

Through Sunday

The Arts of Pacific Asia Show isn't grand; monumental, heart-stopping sights aren't its thing. Instead, it's fun, friendly and the only one-stop-shopping Asian fair the city has, and for all those reasons, worth a visit.

Since the death of the American artist [Toshiko Takaezu](#) this month, the Japanese ceramic traditions that she studied and loved have been on my mind. So I was gladdened to see an intensive display of contemporary work in this vein at Cavin-Morris Gallery's booth in this year's show, with work ranging from a plain porcelain tea bowl by Tsubusa Kato to Toshiaki Fujita's extravagant, sci-fi "Layered Form III," which looks like a saucer-shaped piece of furrowed earth with a glowing red lacquer crater at its center.

The gallery has also been showing Yohei Nishimura's series of nonceramic, kiln-fired books, all of which appear to be swelling and crackling with residual heat. They're scary and moving sculptures, particularly when seen in light of recent events in Japan.

Thomas Murray, in town from California, customarily assembles thematic exhibitions for the fairs he's in, and he's done so again. The theme he's chosen this time is the Tree of Life, which gives him an opportunity to show an appealing array of South and Southeast Asian textiles.

With ancient art from the same regions, [Galerie Christophe Hioco](#) from Paris rewards a lingering stop for its ancient Vietnamese bronze, and for two delightful Indian stone reliefs, one a small Gandharan rendition of the birth of Buddha, the other an 11th- to 12th-century Pala image of Vishnu reclining, all four arms relaxed, as he gets a vigorous foot rub from his petite

Instead, he is playing it relatively straight, stressing the restrained, even mournful side of his sensibility with three groups of large stretched canvases. Together, they make the immense galleries at Gagosian seem especially vast and not a little chilly while quietly wreaking havoc with notions of material, process, subject, scale, space and of course perception. They suggest that space itself — as actual volume, as pictorial illusion and as emotional void — may be one of Mr. Stingel's foremost themes.

In the first gallery, three seemingly identical, heavily textured but nonetheless Photo Realist paintings all offer immense, grisaille renditions of a beat-up photograph of the artist as a somber young man. A crease in the original photograph, translated onto canvas, makes it seem as if a tear is coursing down his right cheek.

The second, narrow gallery is lined with closely spaced, not-quite-identical paintings all made by silk-screening silver paint onto silver through a lace tablecloth. These gaudy monochromes create a dim hall of mirrors while evoking the horizontal: not only tabletops, but also Oriental rugs, with the forced paint functioning as woven pile.

In the third, biggest and best gallery, five humongous canvases proffer messy fields of tarnished gold that seem to have accrued by a series of random painterly acts, including serving as a floor covering wherever the previous silver paintings were made. Floorboards are intimated in some works; in another, the ghost of “Plan B,” Mr. Stingel's 2004 floral-carpet installation at Grand Central Terminal, intimates a vast decorated ceiling. With their tawdry, topsy-turvy grandeur, these works appropriate the bare concrete floor, which faintly reflects them, as a “Stingel.” They also conflate lots of Mr. Stingel's interests while at the same time seeming like something new, at least for him.

A fourth version of the self-portraits — this one in color — awaits in the show's final gallery. It is more cheerful, but maybe a twist too many. The three-part expansion, contraction and expansion of space; the progression from handmade to printed to randomness; and the segue from gray to silver to gold are enough. **ROBERTA SMITH**

JUDITH LINHARES

‘Riptide’

Edward Thorp Gallery

210 11th Avenue, at 25th Street

Chelsea

Through April 2

Judith Linhares may be the [Dan Flavin](#) of painting. The largest canvases in her fourth solo exhibition at the [Edward Thorp Gallery](#) are dominated by softly glowing, nearly fluorescent shades of pastel green, pink, blue and yellow. They are laid on in long, slatlike strokes that remain discrete, visual elements even as they overlap. As with prior paintings, the majority of these images depict slightly sly Edenic scenes in which naked women loll about — beneath trees, beside oceans or in caves — with a bottle of wine, some cake (or turkey drumsticks) and occasionally a male companion, while bubbles or maybe planets tumble across the hallucinatory skies.

While the visual ease and richness and especially the light of these paintings are seductive, they start to seem interchangeable after a while, too sweet and vague. Stronger, because they are nastier, are several smaller works that ring the show, many of which feature animals. These include the alert, wasp-waisted jungle cat of “Tigress,” the bug-eyed, sharp-fanged red dog of “Hound” and the rather too-friendly fox (or wolf) of “Hunger” — works whose odd optical buzz suggests that 3-D glasses might be needed. The balance of wit and beauty that Ms. Linhares is after may be at its best in two even smaller paintings — one of a vase of flowers and another of a Staffordshire spaniel. The colors darken, but the inner light remains. **ROBERTA SMITH**

MARY ELLEN CARROLL

‘Prototype 180’

Arthur Ross Architecture Gallery

Buell Hall, [Columbia University](#)

1172 Amsterdam Avenue

Morningside Heights

Through next Friday

Sometimes you have to turn somersaults to get attention. The artist Mary Ellen Carroll has done the architectural equivalent in a conceptual piece called “Prototype 180,” which sought to revolutionize the way a city treats its neighborhoods. The project is set in Houston, a city whose zoning laws make it susceptible to unchecked and unsupervised development. Under these conditions, money can be the primary regulator, and neighborhoods are under threat as organic entities, liable to be broken up, built over and basically erased at any time.

For “Prototype 180,” [Ms. Carroll](#) focused on one such Houston neighborhood, Sharpstown: ethnically diverse, mostly middle class, but unprospering. She scouted out and bought a privately owned but abandoned 1960s ranch-style house there. Then she made a big change.