

Miles, Christopher, "Anna Sew Hoy: Peres Projects," *ArtForum*, December 2003.

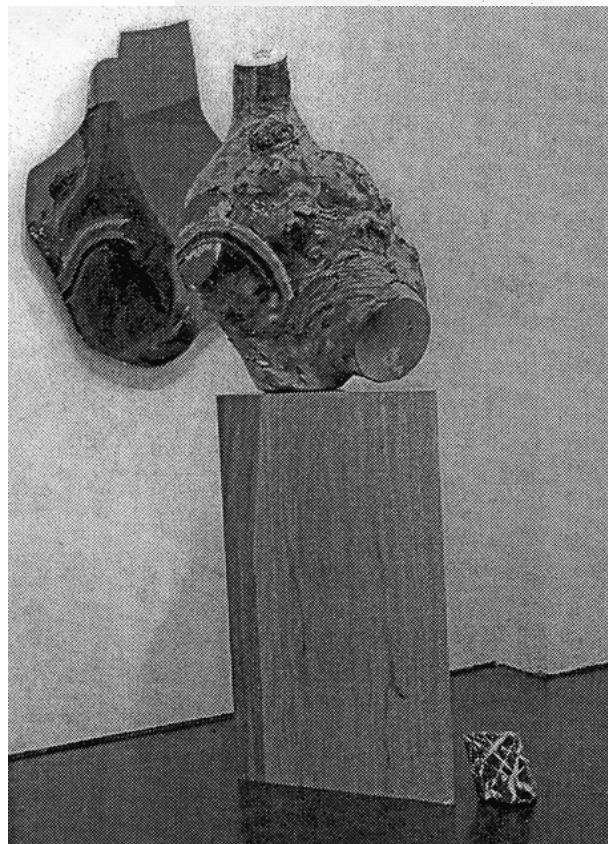
LOS ANGELES

ANNA SEW HOY PERES PROJECTS

Part fine art, part folk art, with a dash of bling-bling thrown in, the recent sculptures in Anna Sew Hoy's West Coast solo debut cobble together materials as disparate as driftwood, perfume bottles, and back issues of *National Geographic*, all with guidance from the art of ikebana. In this Japanese form, flowers and leaves are arranged in vessels into harmonic, dynamic compositions—each a mannered attempt to convey an impression of nature. But if ikebana is these sculptures' starting point, it's met with echoes of a range of artistic practices (Isamu Noguchi, Howard Finster, Jessica Stockholder, David Nash, and Cady Noland) linked together with attitude straight from the nightclub; these works arrive tarted up with jewelry, designer fragrances, and stickers from the indoor swap meet. *Calm day* (all works 2003) is a good example: a flash/trash puzzle/pretzel made of crushed Sapporo beer cans joined end to end into a dynamic loop-the-loop, accessorized with a gold chain, and spritzed with Odeur #2 by Commes des Garçons, a bottle of which is, conveniently, attached to the piece.

In Sew Hoy's strongest sculptures, components and materials seem to invade, envelop, barnacle over, and feed off one another. *Jamaica* features a lovely, clumsy burlled tree stump made over into a hard-body torso, its clear-coated surface tattooed with a rainbow. This glam queen of the forest perches atop a "Minimal" wood-grain pedestal (its purer, synthetic kin); in front sits a rock, spattered with paint reminiscent less of a Pollock than of a vintage Eddie Van Halen guitar. Flat surfaces where the stump's roots and limbs were sawed off are made into atmospheric color fields that suggest the solid stump is a kind of vessel surrounding a Rothkoesque void. The piece is outfitted with a mirror cut into the shape of its silhouette, providing a glitzy shadow and allowing admirers to check out its backside.

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Anna Sew Hoy, *Jamaica*, 2003, eucalyptus wood, acrylic paint, spray paint, stickers, tring, mirror, and rock, dimensions variable.

There are moments when Sew Hoy's constructions disappoint, when their craft could have been better and the work pushed toward deliberately fine rather than default-funky. A few are reducible to a kind of Urban Outfitters common denominator or a rainy-day project dreamed up by bored reality-TV housemates. But at their best, Sew Hoy's garbage-to-gold combinations reveal a Midas touch for negotiations of generational and cultural gulfs and bridges, as well as that old and familiar—though ever-fresh and surprising—gap between art and life.

—Christopher Miles