

Art & Design

ART IN REVIEW

Jay Heikes: ‘Inanimate Life’

By [ROBERTA SMITH](#)

Published: October 22, 2010

Marianne Boesky Gallery

509 West 24th Street

Chelsea

Through Saturday

The second New York gallery solo of [Jay Heikes](#) presents an oddly Romantic artist in love with nature and its processes and interested in works that seem almost mutually exclusive in style and material, yet collude beautifully.

In the first space, two works meditate on the delicacies of rust. “Heartless Ascension” is a gangly sculpture in rusted iron and bronze whose linear extensions and denser junctions alternate between synthetic and organic, graceful and awkward. Is it a fragment of a weeping willow, a tangle of partly downed electrical wiring or maybe a trap — in which case has it caught something? “Conversation With a Bitter Pill” is a sort of painting: a slab of steel leaning against the wall, with hints of light, leaf and pattern that seem rusted into its surface.

In the second space, “Molting,” a series of paper-thin sheets of a silvery material, lies uneasily on the floor, ragged of edge and susceptible to every breeze. It is made of gelatin, and the breezes are enhanced by “Outside World,” a small opening, covered by an elegant white grill, that Mr. Heikes has made in the gallery’s exterior wall. Disturbed-looking humans are intimated in two large, murky photographs, and two tall sculptures made from hand-colored porcupine quills stuck in wood introduce more animalistic corporeal presences.

“Inanimate Life,” the show’s title, is a good term for art. Its various parts and the back and forth among them will mesmerize, if you let them.

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: October 26, 2010

An art review on Friday about an exhibition of work by Jay Heikes that was at the Marianne Boesky Gallery in Chelsea referred incorrectly to the show. It was Mr. Heikes’s second solo gallery show in New York, not his first.

A version of this review appeared in print on October 22, 2010, on page C25 of the New York edition.