

**Bound Women, Sacred Temples, Chiseled Males: 57th Street Art**

By Michael Killeen

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Funakoshi's Sculptures

A vision of figures elevated out of a forest inspired Katsura Funakoshi's sculptures at Greenberg Van Doren, his first North American exhibition in 14 years.

A pregnant female stands sentinel at the gallery's entrance, her form cut off at the waist, the torso supported by four saplings that arc out from her fecund belly to the floor.

Funakoshi carves from camphor wood, a material he considers the closest match to Japanese skin. Surfaces run from polished to chiseled; necks are elongated and the otherworldly eyes are painted marble.

Five half-length human forms, with expressions expectant, regal, knowing or serene, surround the strongest piece in the show: a sculpted figure with a woman's breasts, a man's genitals, long leather straps for ears and a just-caught grasshopper between its teeth, rising above the rest on four curved branches. A wash of cyan faintly coats the neck, turning deeper as it colors the navel and drips in darker threads down the thighs.

Seen together, these sculptures combine male, female, animal and the natural world, with a nod to the spiritual in the position and purpose of those errant, open hands attached to a back or shoulder -- ready, according to the artist, to receive good news.

"Katsura Funakoshi: New Sculpture" is on view through May 3 at 730 Fifth Ave.; +1-212-445-0444; <http://www.gvdgallery.com>.

