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AIKO HACHISUKA, ELEVEN RIVINGTON

11 Rivington Street, Lower East Side, Through June 14

By Roberta Smith



Aiko Hachisuka's "Bleed the Freak," a sculpture with silk-screen ink applied to bunched clothing, at Eleven Rivington. Credit: Courtesy of the artist and Eleven Rivington

In the increasingly crowded field of stuffed fabric sculptures, Aiko Hachisuka's stand out for their deliberation and complexity and for their sleights of hand. At first sight, the five sculptures in her New York solo debut suggest giant, colorfully glazed ceramic planters or tea bowls; their bright surfaces almost gleam.

The tactile reality of these big, barrel-like forms quickly reveals itself, however; then comes the recognition that the textiles used are all garments individually stuffed and carefully stitched together. Shirt collars and sleeves emerge, as do pant legs, the necks of sweaters and the occasional pleated skirt. Sometimes tangles of human forms are intimated: an arm flung here, a leg there. (They can bring to mind the jumbled limbs and lavishly patterned kimonos found in erotic Japanese woodblock prints.)

The final realization is that the fabrics' patterns are often supplemented by scattered shards of bright red, gold, green and other tones. These result from applying silk-screen ink to a tightly bunched garment that may then be rebunched and painted with a contrasting color. Or, after painting, the garment may be smoothed out and pressed against a second garment, making a kind of monoprint. The applied color covers the forms like a net, holding them together while also suggesting the crushed metals of John Chamberlain's sculptures.

The process of making these works is more elaborate than their content, which is to say that they verge on craft. They are also so complete that it is difficult to see where Ms. Hachisuka will take them from here, but it will be interesting to watch.