

KANTOR / FEUER GALLERY

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Zach Feuer Gallery

AARON SPANGLER You don't see much wood carving in elite Chelsea galleries. An antiquated craft with little relevance to modern technologies of communication or to a competitive, fast-paced contemporary art market, it is too hard to learn and takes too much time to do well. So it is exciting to come upon the large, intricate reliefs carved from broad, three-inch slabs of maple and painted black by Aaron Spangler. Mr. Spangler, who is from Minneapolis, lives in Brooklyn and is here having his second solo exhibition in New York, uses his extraordinary technique to elaborate profusely detailed, darkly comic visions of rural, post-apocalyptic ruin. The scenes appear to be set in a remote, Appalachian region where wrecked buildings, crashed cars and trucks and abandoned appliances litter the densely forested landscape. There are other

more fantastic elements, too, like the giant ears of corn and the many tire swings hanging from high branches in "Imperial Trees" (above). There is something Medieval and a little fanatical about Mr. Spangler's work, as though its author were a backwoods prophet carving his own Book of Revelations. Drawing closer, you search for narrative clues about what has caused these disastrous scenarios, but few if any are forthcoming. What you do discover are many more details and a more immediate sense of the sculptor's hand. Mr. Spangler is not a fussy finisher; he leaves things a bit rough and this creates a magical tension between the raw material and the epic fantasy. (Zach Feuer Gallery, 530 West 24th Street, Chelsea, (212) 989-7700, through Feb. 26; free.)

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