

ARTFORUM



View of “Carlos Reyes,” 2016

Carlos Reyes

REAR WINDOW

136 W. 118th Street, #2

March 28–May 8, 2016

For “Feather Belly,” Carlos Reyes’s solo exhibition here, the peephole in the gallery’s door has been reversed, allowing visitors to peek into the space before entering. What you witness gazing through it is a fisheye perspective on an ominous scene: An enormous, spiky deathtrap occupies the entire entrance floor. In a corner, an orb, colored black and blue like a bruise, shines a beam of white light in the direction of the peephole, signaling the work’s menacing

presence to any potential voyeur. An anxiety-inducing sight, to say the least.

The scene unravels, however, once one is inside the gallery. What at first looked like a prop from the *Saw* franchise of torture-porn films is actually *Feather Belly #1* (all works 2016), a sculpture composed of a smooth sheet of luminous steel (formerly the floor panel of a large utility van), pierced by spikes made of walnut. The emotional and intellectual trajectory of this work’s unfolding—from behind the door, then through it—is eerie, mesmerizing. It is a formally beautiful landscape that’s weirdly familiar and utterly foreboding.

The same uncanny transition happens with *Feather Belly #2*, the aforementioned round, light-emitting sentinel. In actuality, it’s a bowling ball with a small LED shining from one of its finger holes. Hanging on the gallery walls are *Feather Belly #3* and *#4*, two unfired clay works resembling charred wood. The surfaces of these pieces—in deep, inky tones of purple, black, and blue—resemble reptile skin. Their psychedelic patina is derived from ordinary desktop-printer ink. Again, Reyes manages to successfully pervert the boundaries between the mundane and the otherworldly.