

ART IN REVIEW

By Roberta Smith

Dec. 12, 1997

Eric Wolf

Jessica Fredericks Gallery

504 West 22d Street

Chelsea

Through Dec. 24

In his second solo gallery show, Eric Wolf continues to effectively explore the possibilities of a black-and-white palette in paintings that flip back and forth between positive and negative, and between abstraction and representation. The tension between painting and works on paper also applies here, for these works sometimes suggest the tactility of woodcut prints and the intimacy of extra-large ink drawings, in exaggerated form.

The increased scale heightens the visual energy, as does the dominant subject of roiling skies full of arabesque clouds and whiplash currents, presented on their own or bearing down on trees. It is as if Mr. Wolf means to update Chinese painting by adding the jumpiness of Op Art and the muscularity of Jack Youngerman's thick-surfaced, two-color works from the early 1960's. Roy Lichtenstein's assured compositions may also be an inspiration. Appropriately, two of the paintings depict the intricately organic forms of Chinese scholar's rocks, whose dramatic overhangs and perforations read as alternately solid and ephemeral, like so much smoke. ROBERTA SMITH

We are continually improving the quality of our text archives. Please send feedback, error reports, and suggestions to archive_feedback@nytimes.com.

A version of this article appears in print on Dec. 12, 1997, Section E, Page 41 of the National edition with the headline: ART IN REVIEW. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)