

## New York Times Review

May 7, 2004

HOLLAND COTTER

### Min Kim

ATM Gallery  
170 Avenue B, near 10th Street  
East Village

Through May 23

The finely made paint-and-ink work of the Korean-born artist Min Kim amounts to a kind of child's vision of Eden. A drawing in the first gallery shows a nude prepubescent girl with huge eyes lying alone on the ground, looking sleepy, even stupefied, as small plants sprout from her body. Across the room, in a big, elaborate collage made of the interwoven forms of cutout trees and clouds, she appears again, revived and alert, flying through the air on the back of a bird, as if on a quest.

Next she meets a boy, almost her twin, in a garden dominated by a single phallic treelike flower, which arches over them and seems to shed a shower of celebratory glitter on their union. A final picture brings the story of Paradise Found to an ambiguous conclusion: the girl sits, alone again, in a beautifully rendered Chinese-style landscape, over which hangs a collaged tangle of snaking black lines.

Ms. Kim's formal skill and ingenuity, particularly in her use of cut paper, are impressive: precise, economical, but with imaginative flourishes. Her application of cartoon-style sweetness to an adult-style morality tale is a device common in art of the moment, and can easily produce results that are arch, sappy or slight. She makes it work through an illusion of ingenuousness, by presenting a condition of innocence more or less straight: threatened from without, unblemished from within; that's all.