

NY CULTURE

Abstract Mainstays, Dark Mixed Media 'American Abstraction' Exhibit in Chelsea and Kris Kuksi's 'Revival'

Joshua Liner

540 W. 28th St., (212) 244-7415

Through Jan. 18



Kris Kuksi's 'Churchtank Type 13 (Retired)' (2013) at Joshua Liner. Joshua Liner Gallery

By PETER PLAGENS

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If the aliens in "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" had modeled their advanced civilization on 17th-century Baroque Catholic architecture and statuary, the mother ship might have looked a lot like one of Kris Kuksi's mixed-media assemblages. Mr. Kuksi (b. 1973) cobbles together his objects with a jeweler's touch from toy parts, plastic figurines and detritus from model kits that he obtains from all corners of the globe.

What initially comes across as a slightly sooty marzipan concoction of strange ornaments turns out, on closer inspection, to have a dark side. These wall-mounted half-chandeliers contain chains and swords and helmets and guns and fangs and all sorts of goth accoutrements, which combine to give Mr. Kuksi's art an overall video-game vibe. It's about as close to "Assassin's Creed" as immobile objects can get.

The anomalous, freestanding "Churchtank Type 13 (Retired)"—a cathedral-like superstructure upon a war machine's base—is the artist's sole venture into outright social comment. As sculpture, it's a cut above anything else in the show, but the bluntness of the piece's op-ed quotient is at odds with Mr. Kuksi's principal artistic virtue, which is to cram so much portentousness into his work that each Deep Hidden Meaning cancels out another, so that everything ends up just good, clean, malevolent fun.

Source: <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304367204579268022605224760?mg=id-wsj>