

■ ART

Tam Ochiai: tail (exercises in punctuation)

August 10-September 24, Mon.–Fri., 11 – 6

Team Gallery, 527 W. 26th St (betw. 9th & 10th Aves.), 212-279-9219; Mon.–Fri., 11 – 6, Free

The question of authorship gets a gentle workout in tail (exercises in punctuation), Tam Ochiai's light-as-a-feather collaborative installation at Team. Ochiai invited children aged 2-12 to make copies of his drawings on the main gallery walls. But since Ochiai's work seems heavily influenced by juvenile art, who was copying whom? In any case, the children quickly began to follow their own inspiration and all of their drawings are signed, to differentiate what from what. Colored pencils, erasers and copies of Ochiai's drawings are scattered on a table in the center of the room. The walls are covered with delicate scribbles that increase in sophistication as the artists increase in height. A few of Ochiai's own works on paper are pinned over the children's drawings, including green trumpet or squirrel, an image of a squirrel-headed girl playing a horn surrounded by a sea of rich blue-green paint. In the back, 60 more are installed in a grid, including paintings of a gossamer coral spider web and a pair of lavender cat's eyes floating in a field of dull orange. The knowing specificity of Ochiai's Rothkoesque use of color and paint, combined with his piquant figurative imagination, shines out clearly against the children's drawings, and the differences between the works overshadow their affinities.

--- Elisabeth Kley