
ART IN REVIEW

E37

Lesley Dill

George Adams Gallery
41 West 57th Street
Manhattan
Through Nov. 25

Words and their relationship with the body — physical, emotional and spiritual — are the subjects of Lesley Dill's explorations in sculpture and works on paper. Ms. Dill emphasizes that although words are conceived in the brain, they are made by the body, from breath shaped by vocal structures. And, indeed, these words seem more robust than the bodies they cling to, which appear spent by the intensity of their birth and delivery.

The best things here are two small, wraithlike personages of white cast paper, one titled "We Live in Smoke" after a poem by Hank Hine. The figure sits crumpled on a stool, the words of the poem ("We live in smoke/the words no sooner out/than we are lost to them") fumbling across its head, shoulders and chest. A larger, more inscrutable wall piece is "Hindi Girl With Kafka," a triple female figure made of three pairs of Asian women's work clothes (the middle one has dangling feet), with a phrase from Kafka cut across the chest and loins.

Her own pet word, "Radiance," appears often. In a rather too elegant wall piece, "Leaf Radiance," a large spray of gold leaves, each lettered with "radiance," is held by a wan hand. More modest and mysterious is a series of thin "talking" hands fastened to the wall, each bearing words supported by the fingers, which also dangle white and colored threads as symbols of connection to the world. In "Radiance (Hands)," each finger of a waxy hand streams with threads while supporting the letters that make up the word. "Radiance (Head)," a small wallpiece, comprises a head and shoulders built from a jumble of letters spelling "Radiance" many times over.

A group of works on paper is not very effective but includes the arresting "I Saw the Wind Within Her" (Dickinson), a collage on Hindi newsprint that includes the inevitable threads and an unoccupied shirt with a head made of a mass of photographed eyes. Ms. Dill's work can be haunting, but sometimes its preciousness palls.

GRACE GLUECK