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By MICHAEL BRENSON

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New Visions (SoHo 20 Gallery, 469 Broome Street): In "New Visions," Kellie Jones, the visual arts director of the Jamaica Arts Center, has selected work by four unaffiliated artists: Candida Alvarez, Serena Bocchino, Yong Soon Min and Lorna Simpson. Although each artist is very different, everything in the show is about identity, absence and questions.

Lorna Simpson juxtaposes four sequential written clichés, including "Is She Pretty as a Picture," "Or Black as Coal," against a photographic portrait of a young black woman seen not face on, but from the back; in the process words are drained of meaning and the image seems full and unknown. In her paintings, Candida Alvarez weaves traces of leaves and mesh and "naïve" images of people into works that seem at the same time festive and wistful. In Serena Bocchino's paintings, musical instruments, such as bells, cellos and drums, hover behind a pictorial film like mementos of a paradise lost.

The most involved and moving work in the show is Yong Soon Min's "Half Home." Min uses words, images and objects to communicate what it means to have been raised in a divided Korea and then moved to the United States. The work includes tracing paper that hangs over words and images like banners. In order to read the words and see the images, the paper has to be pressed down. Making our way over the work is therefore like groping over a personal Wailing Wall. The only trace of the artist's hand is red calligraphy on the tracing paper: the effect is not only to dramatize the artist's sense of anger, difference and displacement, but also to turn the tables on us by placing us in the position of being unable to understand. (Through Jan. 17.)

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