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EXHIBITIONS THE LOOKOUT

by Brian Boucher



Cao Fei

at Lombard Freid,

through Oct. 25

518 W. 19th St.

Imagine Peyton Place with environmental problems, its raunchy small-town dramas enacted by plastic toy figures inhabiting a kind of railroad model set, shot (with the artist directing) by an accomplished feature film cinematographer. That's what you get in "La Town," the latest video-photo combo exhibition from Chinese phenom Cao Fei (b. 1978). The artist emerged in her late 20s—in the unlikely environs of the manufacturing center Guangzhou—with a series featuring young costumed fantasy actors (aka "cos players"), then went on to explore the dreamy aspirations of factory workers, the animated fantasia of RMB City (RMB designates Chinese currency), the online adventures of her foxy Second Life avatar China Tracy and even—last year in the film *Haze and Fog*—Chinese zombies.