

CHAREST-WEINBERG



Through the Plexi Trees
by Gretchen Wagoner

[The Forest](#)

Charest-Weinberg Gallery
250 nw 23rd Street, Miami 33127

February 19, 2011 - June 18, 2011



John Espinosa's past work has included a work made of memory foam stained prism colors by Kool-Aid flowing through a water pump. He once made a sculpture that contained fifty gallons of saltwater captured from the Bermuda Triangle. A cast shape of David Bowie's face shedding paint tears, reminiscent of religious icons, was the subject of another piece. Espinosa is an artist that deftly translates his concepts with whatever material he commits to for the particular project.



His solo show *Forest* recently opened at Charest Weinberg. In the center of the gallery sits a structure made up of wooden beams on which photographs hang. The photographs are of drawings that Espinosa found behind walls in his studio, part pictograph, part scribble, and their origins a mystery. This element of the unknown and belief are ongoing themes in Espinosa's work. In the older work *L'Inconnue de la Seine* he ruminated on the visage of an unidentified young girl whose death mask was sold in Europe throughout the '20s and '30s and eventually became the face of CPR mannequins, therefore immortalizing the anonymous girl as the "most kissed face" in history.

The most compelling works in *Forest* are the six unique sculptures made up of clear Plexiglas and displayed on mirrored pedestals. The transparent clear colored acrylic is very thin and collaged to recreate three-dimensional versions of the found drawings. Overhead spotlights then light the sculptures and the edges are transformed to bright sharp lines grounding the work. The mirrored pedestals add depth and layers like that of finding lost drawings behind layers of walls. Ghost-like, amorphous shapes made of fractured light patterns dance on the walls and ceiling, creating an environment of shadows. As with Espinosa's past work, it is this kind of aesthetic beauty that draws the viewer in but then leaves her to wonder...where did these drawings come from in the first place? Will we ever know? Does it really matter?

~Gretchen Wagoner