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Less is nice

By Edith Newhall
For The Inquirer

Good things do come in small packages in Pentimenti Gallery's "Thinking Small," and the exhibition itself is well thought out and nicely installed.

This could have been a larger group show than it is, but the works of the nine artists, most of whom always have made modestly scaled work, have plenty of breathing room, which suits both the diversity of the work and the proportions of this rather small gallery.

Joseph Hu's Bartram's Ginkgo - a pile of facsimiles of the leaves of the ancient ginkgo tree at Bartram's Garden, all 1,500 of which were individually cut and painted in yellow and green watercolor by Hu - is the star of the show, at least partly because of its amusingly casual placement in the gallery, as if someone had left a door open and the wind had blown the leaves into that particular spot.



"Bartram's Ginkgo" by Joseph Hu in watercolor on cut paper, is part of the "Thinking Small" exhibition at Pentimenti Gallery.

Like Hu's work, Kevin Fink-lea's painted plywood boxes look good anywhere, but they stand out here for their uncontrived plainness, a quality they share with the minimalist Donald Judd's much larger boxes. Nearby, Anthony Cervino's strange Pinocchio figures of cast and found plastic painted glossy white, though totally different from Finklea's work, have a similarly mysterious, unfathomable quality.

The placement of Margaret Murphy's small, colorful Henna Hands - cut and painted hand shapes collaged with magazine coupons - across from Judy Gelles' Photographic Memories, archival pigments of toys, was another clever move.

There are many other surprisingly compatible treats in this show, by Darlene Charneco, Matthew Kucynski, Aurora Robson, and Kate Stewart.

Pentimenti Gallery, 145 N. 2d St., 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays through Fridays, 12 to 5 p.m. Saturdays.
www.pentimenti.com or 215-625-9990. Through Saturday.