

NEW CITY

2-8-01

5 SHOWS TO SEE NOW

→ **DEANNA LEE, "10,000 offerings,"** paintings and sculpture. What Deanna Lee offers is a critique of kitsch and pop culture; what we get is both better and worse than that.

Hundreds of tiny plaster figurines of the smurfy, mushroom-shaped mandarin that most of us remember from "Fantasia" are variously painted and arranged to form the character for "longevity." The cartoon figure is a curious icon, and undoubtedly has different resonance for Chinese people than for the rest of us, but what is most interesting is the paint job. Like the classic design-class exercise of designing a hubcap: the first few are easy, but by the fiftieth—how much more can be done within the constraints? As near as I can tell, each little plaster blob is differently spotted, or stripped or splashed with bright toy-like colors. As a simple collection of similar-but-different objects they make much more sense than whatever cultural commentary seems to be intended, but to see them this way means getting down to floor-level. The colorful, out-of-focus photo Lee chose for her announcement card is the best piece in the show. (Michael Bulka)