Real and purposefully vague

Multimedia artist Victoria Fu makes work that evokes a sense of connection from afar in her show at Samson. She also conjures the space between here and afar as layer upon layer of screens and projections. The show’s title piece, a 16mm film, flickers in grainy black-and-white low on one wall. In it, a blurry figure in the distance walks along a path, and then through the woods, carrying a mirror. The sun bounces off the mirror and into the camera lens at the viewer, obliterating the image in a flash of white. It feels like direct contact, and at the same time, erasure.

Fu offers precise graphite drawings that look modeled on old photographs, small images that float on large white sheets of paper, such as “Smile,” which depicts a woman grinning gamely for the camera. From her hairstyle, I’d place her in the 1940s. There’s immediacy in the drawing’s realism, but distance in its small scale and the suggestion of time passed.

Veiled photographic images, such as “Window,” are purposefully vague: filtered through red, depicting the slats of a blind, a window, the overhanging branches outside — so that it seems as if what we’re looking at is not as important as what we’re looking through, and that includes the camera lens and our own eyes. There are rich, moody filters upon filters between us and anything tangible, Fu seems to be saying, and even when something does connect, it may be merely a reflection, the flash of the sun in a mirror.

VICTORIA FU:
Milk of the Eye
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