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Chelsea Openings: Button Collages, Rusty Monuments, and Sunken Ships

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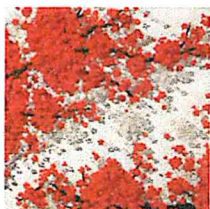
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IN THE AIR made the rounds of a few Chelsea galleries last night and happened upon quite a diverse group of shows that ranged from a delicate series of button collages to sunken-ship sculptures and '50s-retro staged photos. Check out our brief tour of April in the art neighborhood below.

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Ran Hwang at Leila Heller Gallery



Korean artist Ran Hwang has a shimmering series of compositions that turn translucent and opalescent clothing buttons into abstracted depictions of birds, flowers, and Asian architecture in "Transition" at Leila Heller gallery. Though the subject matter of her work is decidedly simplistic — it rehashes the imagery Eastern art history without adding much of anything — the execution is still staggering. The artist connects the works' labor-intensive process, which includes threading the buttons, layering them, and hammering in pins, to the disciplined state of Zen meditation. It's pretty hard not to love her 3D renderings of trees riotously in bloom.

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