

Smith, Roberta. "Reviews/Art; Provocative Exhibitions at Museums and Galleries That Are New New York City," *The New York Times*, 5 August 1988.

## **The New York Times**

Situated between the Brooks and Krasner exhibitions on the North Shore is the Nassau County Museum of Fine Art in Roslyn Harbor where "Tattooed Angel: Painting and Sculpture by Robert Kobayashi" can be seen. Now 63 years old, Mr. Kobayashi has only a few solo exhibitions to his name, but habitués of lower Manhattan may know his private showcase, Moe's Meat Market at 237 Elizabeth Street. The artist has presented changing displays of his nailed tin sculptures and reliefs in the windows of this defunct (but still labeled) butcher shop for several years, and the flavor of his efforts there are recaptured at the Nassau County Museum in both photographs and a room-size installation.

Mr. Kobayashi's art includes paintings, sculpture, reliefs and toylike objects, a range that is united by an unerring sense of craftsmanship that never hardens into pure technique and by a love of naive and folk art of all kinds. The artist's neo-Pointillist paintings - which push Seurat in the direction of the Siennese - would probably work better as children's book illustrations. But his mute, monolithic figures cast a more original spell. Their various tin surfaces atomized (or "pointillized") by the tiny nails' heads, they are full of subtle transformations and asides. In "Nose With 30 Nails," the protuberance in question belongs to a female portrait bust of pioneer forbearance whose pedestal is a fluted Greek column. And "Triple Crown," which shows the all-American weathervane come to life as an upright, jogging horse, seems an especially apt metaphor for the way Mr. Kobayashi brings folk art up to date.