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Anya Gallaccio
Lehman Maupin
39 Greene Street, SoHo
Through Nov. 3

BY ROBERTA SMITH

“Because Nothing Has Changed,” the installation piece that dominates Anya Gallaccio’s debut exhibition in New York, lives in the mind like a great stage set. The work centers on a bluntly truncated tree that is unnaturally laden with bright red ceramic apples. But much of the drama comes from the gallery’s plywood floor, which has been scorched black; it intensifies the sense of an eerie landscape, at once stark and excessive, in which nature is out of balance.

Ms. Gallaccio, who was born in Scotland, lives in London and is a first-generation Y.B.A. (Young British Artist), is known for using organic materials like fruit, flowers, ice and chocolate, which decay or disintegrate while on display. With the ceramic apples and the tree, which is cast bronze, she is clearly opting for permanence, and quite successfully.

Other attempts include bronze casts of a large twig of holly, 19 broad beans and their five pods, and potatoes sprouting roots. But these works, while quite seductive, conform to a high-end realism made familiar by several generations of European and American contemporary artists. A large color photo graph of the artist lying at the edge of an algae-covered swamp with red flowers sprinkled about joins the current craze among photographers, especially women, for girl-in-the-landscape melodrama.