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- CLASSIFIEDS
- PERSONALS
- PROMOTIONS

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Arts Review

BY SALVADOR CASTILLO

'Femme Fantastique'

Volitant Gallery, through Nov. 10

What looks like a giant centipede curling up on the wall welcomes you into Volitant Gallery. Upon closer inspection, you see that it is a collage of ski masks with pairs linked by a wisp of smoke and feathers wiggling from the sides. Farther away but still clearly visible from the entrance stands a colorful collage of fabrics. Bright greens and yellows alternate with bright pinks and oranges in an almost phallic construction. From the patterns of triple concentric circles, diamonds pointing in the cardinal directions and other Andean cultural symbols, a woman emerges. Daphane Park and Donna Huanca begin the stories with the father and mother. The "feathered serpent," Aztec god Quetzalcoatl, and the "mother universe," Inca goddess Pachamama, bring their influence of life (maize and harvesting) and death (resurrection and earthquakes) to make sure things get Grimm and Goosey.

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Nancy Baker and Annabel Linquist waste no time in conflating and dispelling any timeline trajectory. Baker's vibrantly colored, tightly rendered early-Renaissance compositions are disrupted with rocket ships and oozing blossoms. Linquist's graffitilike paint drips and pencil scrawls portray a century-old writer. Complex prismatic characters gather their arms. At least one of Frankie Martin's videos feature flashily costumed persons with suggestively placed "X" emblems. Debra Hampton, Angeliska Polacheck, Wendy Red-Star, and Huanca each piece together elements to create stimulating works, figures depending on their disparate parts to become whole.

Like fables, totem animals confront a vertigo of challenges. Carla Gannis presents an uneasy Ms. Phenomenal Woman surrounded by lions and tigers and bears. Joan Jonas plays two Brothers Grimm tales about facing fear, one involving a frog. Frogs and rabbits play baseball in Mimi Kato's bleak cityscape. Nicola Costantino creates a bleak operating room reminiscent of the French film *Delicatessen*. Maybe the Troglodist characters from the movie help in understanding Costantino's nod to Gottfried Helnwein? In this back area of the gallery, Kato and Costantino are joined by Amelia Winger-Bearskin and Jaishri Abichandani in sci-fi industrialism. The evidence of Winger-Bearskin's collaboration *Haircuts by Robots* isn't sufficient in bending time and space in order to witness the performance, but a visit to the website lends more clues. Abichandani does succeed in bending space and combines four pairs of cities into new seamlessly amalgamated postcard vistas.

If we follow Joseph Campbell's recipe for the monomyth, then we must walk back to the entrance with the elixir. The artists in "Femme Fantastique" create fantastic narratives. At times cold and menacing, the gallery allows for intimate and warm resolution within the intricacies of the work. The patches of fabric, magazine cutouts, and references pulled from across history are masterfully woven. Like the daughters of Myraas, both the stories and the work entertain. But mind the clock, or else Bacchus will release the Mexican free-tails.

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 With standout work by Katherine Catmull, Beckett's 'happy' play gets a revival to be grateful for
- Femme Fantastique**
 The fantastic narratives presented are masterfully woven and most entertaining

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