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REVIEW

Mojo Rising  
By Eve Wood  
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*"L.A. Woman," Mar. 22-May 25, 2004, at Gallery C, 1225 Hermosa Beach Avenue, Hermosa Beach, Ca. 90254*



There is something big going down at Gallery C, located in the historic Bijou Theatre building in the sleepy town of Hermosa Beach. It involves five powerhouse ladies whose visions precede them. The show titled "L.A. Woman" is billed as "presenting intimate visual conversations with Los Angeles' most prolific female contemporary artists," and while this statement is true, the exhibition -- which includes works by Jill Giegerich, Becky Guttin, Lisa Adams, Kim McCarty and Meg Cranston -- could be more accurately described as an intensely powerful journey into the hearts and minds of five awesome ladies.

Kim McCarty comes through with another splendidly gestural watercolor titled *Boy Yellow*. The young man in the image is at once confrontational and vulnerable, and testifies to McCarty's amazingly fluid and yet very precise control of both the subject and the medium. McCarty says that "she has always been interested in trying to identify an expression that suggests both longing and loss," and these works certainly attest to that fragility.

Meg Cranston's *Magical Death* is also a potent and highly visceral piece made from papier-mâché. The work, a kind of odd-ball piñata, shows a woman sitting with her hands crossed. The expression on her face is sad and contemplative. The power of this work comes from the fact that this strange woman hangs from the ceiling like a mobile. This is an example of a work that utilizes a traditional art practice, papier-mâché, which is often associated with arts and crafts, in the service of an idea. The woman looks to be considering the weight of the world, or at the very least, her own fate, and the simple materiality of the work plays off the seriousness of her expression.

Jill Giegerich also employs papier-mâché in her work, although she utilizes the material in conjunction with copper plate, emery grit, ropes and photography. In her piece *Untitled*, Giegerich melds a variety of materials effortlessly, creating a gestalt of hybridized longing, an electric and eclectic utopia. The central figure is a man, shown from the chest up. He has no

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face, no eyes, no single point of entry, though he wears a hat, pulled down over his eyes, had he eyes. The piece exists in an arena between the subliminal and the literal, a place, quietly unknowing itself, at once mythic and serene, a place we want to go to and yet find ourselves already there.

Also aligned with mystery are Mexican sculptor Becky Guttin's oddly distopic assemblages which "humanize our relationship to nature." Made from raw industrial waste materials such as tin foil and bits of aluminum embedded in natural fibers that look like conch shells or giant seeds flayed open, they are rich in metaphor and bridge the gap between provocative beauty and daily observation.

The most passionate work in the show belongs to Lisa Adams, whose staunch vision is, as always, unwavering. Adams, like all the women in the show, continues her own fierce exploration into the dark underbelly of human sexuality and the fractured, tenuous relationships we forge with each other.

Her paintings are often whimsical, and Adams employs humor as an interlocutor between politics and pop culture and her own intensely humanistic vision. Her painting The Raelian Tunnel of Love shows two swans, heads together, the shade between them forging a heart. The world for them looks promising; they are not afraid to face each other.

EVE WOOD's new book of poetry, Love's Funeral, is forthcoming from Cherry Grove Collections at the University of Cincinnati.