



Sunday Afternoon with Clouds by Veronica Jaeger

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: "Creature Equality: works by Veronica Jaeger and Chris Leonard"
Where: themonitor.com/art
When: April 13- for a month or two.

It's Not All About Animals

In the first online exhibition hosted by The Monitor, the works of two local artists reflect an equality of being.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

Artists have been concerned with the role of animals and various creatures in our lives for at least 7,000 years. They have depicted them to embody, satirize, and appraise human behavior by representing human traits; through their unexpected juxtapositions, they can better capture our attention to critique our world. With the online exhibition, "Creature Equality", South Texas artists Veronica Jaeger and Chris Leonard have embraced this subject and ventured further into metaphysical and meta-equality realms. Through paintings, ceramics, and drawings, their subjects/characters achieve equal status; everyone, including dogs and cats, exists as equals. Typically, equality is often contentious.

Jaeger approaches the concept of equality spiritually and scientifically by blending categories of object reference. Leonard works in a psychological direction, merging the human mind-set with strangely humanoid animals. Both have used and moved beyond intellectual categories into personal and intriguing personal narratives. In this collection, Leonard speaks of specific events of our time and specific cultural occurrences; his mind fuses with images derived from cats and

dogs to deliver his messages. Jaeger embraces the spiritual through quantum mechanics to express the oneness of animals and nature and all things. "Sometimes I merge with my dog," she mused. Her concept is fully visualized with the oil painting, "Hairy Self Portrait". Here, a canine image with multiple sets of ears and human feet exhales a bubble symbolizing the impermanence of life. The being in the painting does not really represent someone else; it IS someone. Leonard's ceramic, "Purring and Puffing is he Thinking of Nothing? Puffing and Purring Might his Conscience be Stirring?", ponders what motivates people to be good or bad - what motivates them to put their shopping cart away or leave it in the middle of the parking lot. This too, a unique being, defies a scientific life form. Leonard's deceptively casual ceramics style emits a humorous tone that belies his often-darker inspiration. The "Donegal vs Fu Manchu" pieces demonstrate the absurdity of intolerance; sometimes fighting like cats and dogs, we need more empathy, less judgement. "Bomb Pups-Eleventeen Eight Legged Jake Legged Borderline Feel Like I'm Going To Lose My Mind Your Own Businessers (Bomb Pups/ Aquel sonido espantoso me heló la sangre en las venas) vs. the Twelfth of Never was, Man" consists of a series of darkly glazed pup bottles designed to bring the water of life/nourishment for the soul to those in need - those who have lost their way on the path of life and find themselves in some sort of storm. From their visages, not all are benign. After all, we are the reapers of what we sow. "They give you what you need," said Leonard, "That's what they're designed to do."

Jaeger's works reveal how a spiritual idea may be manifested in form; her characters find themselves as lessons to be learned. Her narrative portrays a spiritual time-concept that exists in another dimension. In the beginning of time, according to her belief, we were all created into form from an idea, and that form could be anything a creator wanted. She departed from the traditional God image of an elderly white male in the sky, and instead of the title, "AfterGod", for her painting of a deity, she followed her concept accepting the oneness of all things, changing it to Afterdog, explaining that "An animal could take any form or visual that a human could take." "The Day of the Comet" is a manifesto of creation, expressing the potential equality of all things. Within her views of the logical-illogical, there lurk some deeply humorous passages: the comet is a cat and the hand of God gives life to a house structure with seemingly unrelated parts, but they are only unrelated in our world, In Jaeger's world the structure has the parts it needs.

While Jaeger seeks an alternative reality, Leonard remains emotionally charged in this one. Life is fragile and fluid and who knows what forms it may take? Follow above link to see this elegant and realities-packed online exhibition.

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