

CULTURE MONSTER BLOG

Art review: Orly Cogan @ Charlie James Gallery

BY CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT | ART CRITIC

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Like other domestic crafts, sewing has been a loaded medium for artists ever since the feminist revolution of the 1970s. So the widely used medium isn't so much the intriguing message in New York artist **Orly Cogan**'s L.A. gallery debut, which consists of 12 embroideries, 16 decorated pillows and a sculpture of crocheted confections (pies, cakes, cookies, etc.) Domestic crafts instead stand for a historically mature, even establishment voice.

By contrast, what resonates in the show at Charlie James is Cogan's exuberant faith in sensual indulgence. Her stitchery turns up on baby blankets, vintage printed fabric, doilies and kitchen tablecloths. It depicts images with overtones both religious and pagan -- Eve lolling in the Garden, nymphs fondling frogs who may (or may not) be princes, Mom vacuuming the den in the nude.

Young women snort white powder off mirrors laid on the floor. A backyard picnic table groans with high-calorie yarn-goods. Frilly bed pillows carry platitudes and aphorisms ('We'll keep your resume on file,' 'Is *that* what you're wearing?') spelled out amid pretty butterflies, lush flowers and frolicking horses.

Aligning extreme sensual pleasure with domestic crafts is a savvy move. The raw and the cooked collide and commingle in surprisingly eloquent ways.

--Christopher Knight

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Charlie James Gallery, 975 Chung King Rd., Chinatown, (213) 687-0844, through June 19. Closed Sun.-Tues. www.cjamesgallery.com

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