



JUDITH OSTROWITZ
METAPHORICALLY SPEAKING
Works on Plexiglas and Paper
November 15 - December 20, 2013

OPENING RECEPTION | Friday November 15, 2013 | 6-8 pm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The NYOC Gallery is pleased to announce **Metaphorically Speaking**, a solo exhibition of Judith Ostrowitz's works on Plexiglas and paper. This exhibition will run from November 15 – December 20, 2013 with an opening reception on Friday, November 15th from 6-8:00 p.m.

Judith Ostrowitz's body of work synthesizes the universal language of symbols and archetypes, derived from Alchemy, Qabalah, Tarot and other Western Mystery traditions with images of contemporary objects. Digitized paintings, drawings, and photographs are adhered to Plexiglas and appear to float, suggesting a holographic, ephemeral reality. These fantastical, Neo-Surreal landscapes are akin to our nightly dreams. The viewer feels compelled to decode these symbol-laden compositions and through the very act of examination, personal, revelatory interpretations and new meanings are inferred.

Metaphorically Speaking is a poignant commentary on our emotional and spiritual states. The exhibit's opening image, *Intelligence of the Body*, depicts a motley crew of woodland creatures navigating choppy river rapids on an over-crowded canoe. As a reference to the tarot deck's first card, the Fool, the cast of characters are on a seemingly uncharted expedition. Above them hovers the moon, in the form of a woman in profile, a reference to the 18th card in the Tarot, the Moon. Suggesting our psychological makeup, these animal motifs embody human characteristics such as self-esteem, integrity, curiosity, adaptability, resourcefulness, intelligence, stealth, wisdom and talents.

Opposite this pastiche is another scene depicting a solitary wolf/woman standing alone in a primeval forest. The two sections of this piece are meant to illustrate a narrative, like the panels of a comic book. The forest alludes to that hidden place within us and as quoted from Tom Waits, "She has the whole dark forest living inside of her." The wolf/woman image is interesting to note. Clarrisa Pinkola Estes states in her book, *Women Who Run With The Wolves*, "Women and wolves share certain psychic characteristics: keen sensing, playful spirit and a heightened sense of devotion." This imagery implies that by embarking on the "journey" within, armed with her innate skills and gifts, the wolf/woman evolves, becoming more than she, or those around her, ever thought possible.

As the viewer proceeds through the exhibition, they observe that objects from contemporary life are inserted and integrated with more traditional iconography, as if to imply the balancing or uniting of the past, present and future. Recognizable items are found in unusual places. In one piece, an upholstery tassel stands in for the sun and in another; a sheet of rippled glass represents water. In *The Subject of the Art Braves the Elements, I*, both objects and images are reworked and reconstructed. These transformations refer to the work of Alchemy and the necessity to break down and reconfigure the subject or "self". The sense of personal striving is depicted by a little dog that swims fervently toward the shore and by a woman whose head produces flames because she is "burning with desire." This effort is crowned by a souvenir plate, a type of halo, which represents the ultimate goal of the operation, equilibrium.

Judith Ostrowitz's artwork acts as a doorway to the unconscious. *Metaphorically Speaking* allows the viewer to engage with these works of art in a deeply personal way. Interpretations of Ostrowitz's multi-layered panoramas can and will differ from person to person. What one individual may view as resourcefulness another may construe as intelligence; what one supposes is a rite of passage, another may define as the actual destination. It is all a matter of perspective. These images are "mythopoetic," encouraging reflection upon one's own life - a guide, if you will, through our complex and unfathomable natures. www.judithostrowitz.com

Judith Ostrowitz has exhibited her work at several venues in New York City including the Hudson Guild Gallery, the Sculpture Center, and the Kiana Malekzadeh Gallery and in Germany through the Agentur Bildende Kunst, Berlin. She has a B.F.A. from Pratt Institute, an M.A. in Anthropology from the New School for Social Research and an M.A. and Ph.D in Art History from Columbia University. Ostrowitz currently works at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a Research Associate for the Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas and has published two books: *Privileging the Past: Reconstructing History in Northwest Coast Art* and *Interventions: Native American Art for Far-Flung Territories*.

Curated by Lola C. Shepard | www.lolashepard.com

About the NYOC Gallery

Re-established in 2010, the New York Open Center Gallery exhibits both emerging and mid-career contemporary artists whose body of work primarily focuses on world culture, spirituality, psychology and holistic consciousness. www.opencenter.org/gallery

For Further information, contact Lola C. Shepard:

T: (212) 219-2527 X153 | E: Lola@opencenter.org

Gallery Hours: Mon - Fri | 11am - 6pm