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THE ARTS > VISUAL ARTS

Fantasy farm



"Four and Twenty" by Jennifer Khoshbin

Jennifer Khoshbin's "The Big Bad Wolf" and "Modern Trophies" are on display at One9Zero6 Gallery.

BY JENNIFER HERRERA

In March I came across the works of artist Jennifer Khoshbin and philosopher Paul Lewis during their Luminaria project, *Refarm Spectacle*, which featured carved books with characters physically leaping out of the tomes. So when Khoshbin's latest venture into the surreal opened this past weekend at One9Zero6 Gallery, I expected something fantastical.

Entering the gallery, you'll find a book perched upon a stand open to a poem by Paul Lewis. The first sentence reads: "You wake filled with animals." With a bed set up in the gallery's middle room and visually appealing wallpapered animal heads throughout, his words ring (or chirp) true.

Off With Their Heads! is a collaboration with Lewis, Amy Ritthaler-Gilmour, Jenny McBride, and Jenny Brown, who lend a fractured fairy tale to Khoshbin's print-covered animals. Khoshbin offers a different view of wildlife, one in which beauty, simplicity, and fantasy can dwell together outside of bedtime fables.

"The Big Bad Wolf" is covered in Victorian wallpaper, which balances the wolf's eerie glazed yellow eyes, which peered at me when I got on all fours to check out an unnamed work featuring two kissing

bunnies. The pink paisley bunny acted as a bookend to the middle room's wall — one half of the bunny is in mid-kiss, while its backside is placed at the opposite end of the wall's frame.

On opening night in the middle room a performance took place (which I missed!) in which a suited man wearing a paper chicken mask typed a story on a typewriter. According to Khoshbin, "Rooster man sat motionless at the typewriter except for when he 'pecked' out letters, about one every minute." The story appears on the paper that stretches over the typewriter, down on the floor, and across the bed.

The show then goes to the birds with "Four and Twenty," a collection of 13 birds placed as if they are in mid-flight across half of one of the gallery's walls. The black birds don't necessarily remind patrons of swarming crows á la *The Birds* — instead they present a serene flight into oblivion. "Ka-pow!" is another ode to the birds — a bird is featured with a 1960s Batman-esque word bubble escaping its beak.

Khoshbin successfully brings to the SoSoFlo studio a grown-up version of a fairy tale, ideally expressed in Ritthaler-Gilmour's poem about the deception of the fairy tale and its whimsical views of wolves, owls, and frogs: "a puzzling muddle of fascination." By blending the two most obvious forms of art — words and visuals — Khoshbin demonstrates that the fables we relegate to childhood are more powerful than "some quaint escape."

