

Leap Into the Void

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FEBRUARY 20, 2009

Erin Cosgrove, 3R1N | <()56R0V3



In Julian Gough's essay on *What Manner of Person Art Thou?* (on view at the Hammer) he states:

"Erin Cosgrove is a heretic, whose work critiques both Disney and *The Simpsons*. For her, animation, like salvation, is direct, personal, and deeply felt. She skewers the sentimental lies of Disney, but even more bravely in an American liberal arts context, she points out the fatal flaw in *The Simpsons'* Enlightenment project. Because *The Simpsons*, brilliant as it was in the early seasons (and still is, in flashes), has never acknowledged death."

Death may be an impossible dream for Bart Simpson, now in his 20th year in 4th grade (with no end in sight), but death has also been scrubbed clean from our mediated present, where thousands of flag-draped caskets making their way from the Middle East to American soil invisibly.

Erin Cosgrove's exhibition "What Manner of Person Art Thou?" on view at [Carl Berg Gallery](#) provides the viewer with a back story to her video by the same name ([currently on view at the Hammer](#)

About Me



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Received my MFA from CalArts in 2008. Before that I spent fifteen years in behavioral research. Looking to contact me? Comments go directly to my inbox (and are greatly appreciated).

Museum). We are introduced to a Henry Darger-esque recluse, on-line gamer, and casualty of a scurvy-induced junk food diet. The rear gallery gives us a short video on the foundational scroll—as well as the remaining segments—which take us from the Garden of Eden through the Apocalypse. Cosgrove translates the running commentary of the Bayeux Tapestry to the Pig Latin of “L337 Sp34k” (Leet Speak) the vernacular of Generation Y chat rooms. The front gallery seduces with large-scale animation cells of her polychronic universe, populated by mashups of perverse illuminated manuscript marginalia, showing us a contemporary Garden of Earthly Delights. Those with art history degrees will pat themselves on the back after picking out bits of Giotto, color palettes from African tapestries, and the like.

It seems like the best plan of action for the past eight years was to hole up in a cloistered space, copying mystical and secular tomes, and hope for the plague to end and the enlightenment to come. In some ways, Cosgrove did just that. She spent five years meticulously hand painting each animation cell in her hour-long video, illuminating her visual universe for future generations. But if we've (hopefully) turned a corner, putting our financially profligate ways behind us, how will Cosgrove's practice respond in her future production? Perhaps like Martin Luther, we'll find it nailed to the door across the street.

On view though March 14, 2009 at [Carl Berg Gallery](#), across from [LACMA](#).

