

It is with great pleasure that Brennan & Griffin announces *Dicey Fabulous Carnival*, an exhibition of new paintings by Jeni Spota C.

The architecture of Simone Martini's *Maestà* of 1315, the elaborate metalwork and enamels from the Ottonian period, and Mikhail Bakhtin's theories about the function of Carnival in Renaissance society form the basis for Spota's thickly laid paintings. Spota combines the structural underpinning seen in Martini's *Maestà* with decorative motifs found in 10th and 11th century enamel works by collaging miniature painted forms that are scraped and adhered to larger canvases. Through "fusing" an array of painted parts to form the finished work, Spota references a technique used in the precious stone and metal welding processes used in enamel craft.

The central form of each work is a throned woman holding a child, a reference to the Madonna and child motif employed in many Renaissance-era works, and what the artist refers to as the "universal mother" figure. Amassed around the central figure are mystical beings that take the form of ancestral ghosts, carnies, mimes and witches. Similarly, the portraits housed in friezes that border many of the works replace religious luminaries with costumed and disguised figures, both comical and grotesque, mysterious and spectral. Scenes both macabre and reverent, envision the implosion of the dream world and physical world into an unknown realm existing before birth and after death. *Dicey Fabulous Carnival* is running concurrently with Carnival, the international Catholic holiday celebrated annually in the month of February. During Carnival, participants embrace the reversal of social roles and norms by embodying the dark side of human nature and bring to light the underbelly of society through syncretic pageantry. With it comes Winter's passage to Spring, the promise of fertility, and the transition from darkness to lightness.

Jeni Spota C. (b. 1982) lives and works in New York. She received her Master of Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute in Chicago in 2007. Solo Exhibitions include: *Giotto's Dream*, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL and *Don't Tread on Me*, The Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, CA. Group Exhibitions include: *Unorthodox*, organized by Jens Hoffman, Daniel S. Palmer, and Kelly Taxter, Jewish Museum, New York, NY, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SAIC, Chicago, curated by Scott Reeder and Tyson Reeder, *Minor Mistakes*, John Riepenhoff Experience at Lucie Fontaine, Tokyo, Japan, *À rebours*, curated by Adam Lindemann, Venus Over Manhattan, New York, NY, and *Grisaille*, curated by Alison Gingeras, Luxembourg & Dayan, New York, NY.

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