

Sojourner Truth Parsons
Heartbeats Accelerating
March 25 - April 24, 2016

Words by Andrew Berardini

You were playing like a devil wearing wings
Wearing wings, you looked so grand wearing wings
Do you tape them to your shoulders just to sing?

-Joni Mitchell, "Song About the Midway" (1973)

A long length of naked back like unstepped white beach, a seastripped clarity, a daybreaking vision. Bare and spare, interrupted only by a washy waterful of ethereal black hair, topped just so with a snake-charmer's hat. Her shoulders wing outwards, long thin arms angling with delicate wrists, fragile fingers (each tip kissed with red paint), make a tempting tease to the loose flutter of color that circles her stillness. Though a collection of caterpillars is called an army, the swirling many of butterflies is called a "kaleidoscope." She stands in a thrushing kaleidoscope of butterflies. Few of these lepidoptera brave the purity of her form, but one alights in that wash of hair, wings spread wide to show off its unfettered colors. This bare-backed beauty finds two others a window over, twinned ladies, snake-hatted, a deeper swirl of color wrapping them better than clothes ever could. A panting puppy with its own polychrome dreamcoat looks on.

Sojourner Truth Parsons cut these visions out of canvas and paint, layering these tender pigments in an emotive swirl. Her painting's subjects cool, clear light in a spring blossom. The title of this exhibition comes from a Kate and Anna McGarrigle tune (like Joni, like Sojourner, Canadian sorceresses). And perhaps there's no way to put into words Sojourner's paintings without music. We can try to find its secret chord, hum a few bars, wheeze through its bridges. And with hoarse and broken voices, we do our best to sing along.

In the McGarrigles' melodies, angelic voices trip upward over tinkling notes with a rhythm like a French village concertina pumped by a rastafari. "Love, are you waiting?" In their voices, lightest caresses, you believe that love is waiting. Hiding just behind that shadowy thicket, plunged momentarily beneath the crashing wave, about to knock on your midnight door. Love hears your song carried over the empty alleys and misty glades and follows it here, finding you aswept with butterflies, wrapped only in a gauzy chiffon of music, yearning but not eager, ready for the right call to come snake-charming over the transom, pebbling your window with a song all its own.

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1. *Black and White Bitch Painting a Butterfly*, 2016
Acrylic on Canvas
60 x 48 inches / 152.4 x 121.92 cm
Unique
2. *She's still crying, again!*, 2016
Collaged Canvas and Acrylic
72 x 60 inches / 182.88 x 152.4 cm
Unique
3. *The cool breeze off her back is my facecream*, 2016
Collaged Canvas and Acrylic
72 x 60 inches / 182.88 x 152.4 cm
Unique
4. *Heartbeats Accelerating*, 2016
Acrylic on Canvas
84 x 60 inches / 213.36 x 152.4 cm
Unique
5. *Titled*, 2016
Collaged Canvas and Acrylic
60 x 48 inches / 152.4 x 121.92 cm
Unique

