

The New York Times

Sascha Braunig

*Foxy Production
623 West 27th Street, Chelsea
Through April 30*

Sascha Braunig cooks up a strange brew of portraiture, Surrealism and luminescent abstraction in her auspicious, first solo exhibition. Painting on medium-small-sized canvases with a sensuous, greasy touch, Ms. Braunig renders humanoid heads that have been weirdly transformed. She works not from life or photographs of live people, but from sculptures made of various materials. To mannequinlike heads she adds fabric, sequins and paint, and she casts them in colored light to dreamy, hallucinogenic effect.

“Chameleon” pictures a bald head painted olive green with a yellow diamond shape painted over the face. It has spheres like Ping-Pong balls in its eye sockets and it is covered with circular sequins, as is the moss green drapery in the immediate background. All this Ms. Braunig renders in paint with earnest attentiveness, creating something like a Bonwit Teller window display by a Salvador Dalí descendant. Two paintings of a woman’s sculptural profile overlaid by bands of colored light — orange and blue in one, yellow and gray in the other — are similarly Surrealistic and

even more optically loaded.

Bathed in a red glow, the blue cyclopean being in “Coverage” has a pupil-less eye like a giant pearl centered in a head resembling a Claymation flower. In the nocturnally dark “Eyes Peeled,” a head of tightly wrapped fabric covered with reflective flecks and with a hank of red, flyaway hair gazes back with scary, orbicular eyes like a remonstrative demon. What these enigmas portend I don’t know, but I hope to see more of Ms. Braunig’s spooky progeny in the future.

KEN JOHNSON