

Wilson Michael, "Sascha Braunig", Time Out New York, April 2011



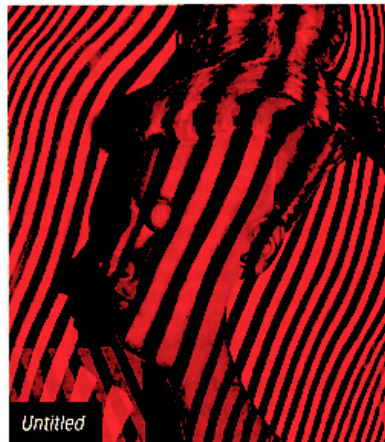
Sascha Braunig



Foxy Production, through Apr 30
(see Chelsea)

The subjects of Sascha Braunig's small but brilliantly intense portrait paintings might be the denizens of some cosmic rave. Masked by swirling patterns and luminous colors, they are impenetrable as individual personalities, either merging with their environments or popping out from them like mirror balls made flesh. *Eyes Peeled* is rendered in shades of electric blue and acid pink that hint at ultraviolet light; *Chameleon* is a riot of yellow and black polka dots that stirs the obsessive abstraction of Yayoi Kusama together with the out-there dress-up of performance artist and fashion icon Leigh Bowery. Braunig, here making her New York solo debut, applies paint to canvas with evident care but still manages to invest each image with the immediacy of a cell phone snap.

At times, Braunig's flaming creatures seem to transcend the human altogether. All have bulging bug eyes and wear inscrutable expressions, but the subject of *Coils* appears also to have a radiant orange heating element sunk into the



back of its skull. And in *Carapace* the painter goes further still, depicting only what looks like a sheet of reflective metal folded, origami-like, into a stylized bust with a bright red comb for a collar.

This alternation between relatively straightforward (albeit psychedelic) figuration and a more ambiguous play with the recombination and recontextualization of objects suggests that there's more to this artist's work than just a retinal freak-out. Rather, she reaches for a true dream-logic, one in which glamour and horror dance hand in hand.—*Michael Wilson*