



John Sonsini's work
on view at the
American Gallery.

Blake Little

Look back in anxiety — such is the mood of an exhibition of figurative work by four L.A. artists. Sonsini paints cartoon-like characters in bondage, such as the grimacing pair shown above. Semi-clothed men, crudely rendered in muddy hues of ochre, gray and black, march across a series of canvases with their teeth and fists clenched. Partial views of their torsos focus on the struggle against the shackles, and ultimately the works seem to tell a tale of escape. Ropes give way and the figure breaks free.

Nancy Evans' paintings reveal angst through archetypes, primitive jungle figures who seem to be half-human and half-beast. They crouch and cower, staring at the viewer with incomprehending eyes of madness. The figures seem to represent the embodiment of different emotional states. One painting features two beings, identically dressed in copper and black stripes. One stands in misery, while the other hovers in mid-air directly above, glaring with ferocious energy — a conscience, a soul, an alter-ego, or perhaps the schizoid quality of the personality.

Milano Kazanjian's experiences as a performance artist are literally reflected in a series of tableaux drawings. The figures are cut out from cardboard and juxtaposed to silver backgrounds, achieving the effect of the proscenium. The works are sketchy, implied narratives, including the drawn storyboard for a film that Kazanjian plans to do, based on his performance *Morales Yamamoto*.

Miriam Feldman's large torsos of men and women are more carefully executed than the others in the show, gelid white bodies frozen against backgrounds of midnight blue. Decorated with odd patterns of color and arcs of scarlet and gold, the effect is of Egyptian figures in a frieze.

The four painters are on view at the American Gallery, 303 S. Hewitt St., downtown, through May 1.

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—Hunter Drohojowska