

# PATRICIA SWEETOW GALLERY

77 GEARY STREET MEZZANINE SAN FRANCISCO CA 94108 415.788.5126 F 788.5207



MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2007

## Jamie Vasta at Patricia Sweetow Gallery

Hurray! Glitter! Jamie Vasta's latest series "Mustn't" is absolutely stunning. Some of the pieces in the show made me experience a funny fluttery feeling inside. Before seeing this show in the flesh, I wouldn't believe it was possible to make sophisticated, rich, virtuosic paintings in nothing more than craft glitter and wood stains. The nine paintings on display at the Patricia Sweetow Gallery are fairly large (48" x 60") works on wood panel. Vasta combines areas of thick glitter application with exposed, stained areas of the wooden supports. The execution of the work is tidy and controlled and it took quite a bit of careful looking to try and figure out how she creates these paintings. My guess is that she begins by projecting and tracing her source photos onto the panels, first stains the areas that will remain raw wood, and then begins filling in the blanks with careful combinations of colored glitter.

This series "Mustn't" is based on Angela Carter's feminist fairytale about two sisters who seduce a hunter and lure him into the woods in order to torture and murder him. Vasta uses her own photography as source material for her paintings, staging her actors like stills from a movie. I'm guessing she goes through a great deal of research, planning and sketches before shooting the photographs and creating the paintings. The care and flawless execution put into this show packs a powerful one-two punch. On the one hand you have splendidly executed images, whose richness and complexity of colors and textures dazzles the eye. On the other hand, you experience the pure joy of gratuitous amounts of girly glitter.

[patriciasweetowgallery.com](http://patriciasweetowgallery.com)

Clothed in lacey, flowing dresses, the women depicted in this story are seen at various stages of the narrative. In “As White As Snow” we see a woman shrouded in lace, ghostlike and seductive. The viewer plays the role of the seduced. In “Wil O’ the Wisp” and “The Beseecher”, we see a man, irresistibly drawn into the women’s trap. “Scarcely a Leaf Left on the Tree” is a tender but oddly eerie scene of a woman brushing a man’s hair. We start to realize something is amiss in “Cottontail“ and “Feral”, scenes of a woman skinning a rabbit, and of a woman dressed in animal furs, down on all fours in the forest like a wolf. Finally in “The Knife” and “In the Rushes” we see the women on the verge of stabbing the man to death. He is bound by plastic and gasping for air. The narrative of the story comes through strongly in the paintings and I think is successful in part by the photorealistic illusion of Vasta’s detailed work. I wasn’t familiar with Angela Carter’s work before seeing this show. I will have to look up some books of hers. From her website I learned she was born in 1940 and had a great passion for classic literature. She spend much of her career rewriting classic fairytales and stories to include a more feminine bent. I’m intrigued and want to know more about her work. I’m thankful to Jamie Vasta for both inspiring me with her work and pointing me to a new writer to explore. Images from [www.jamievasta.com](http://www.jamievasta.com) [www.patriciasweetowgallery.com](http://www.patriciasweetowgallery.com) [www.angelacartersite.co.uk](http://www.angelacartersite.co.uk) Jamie Vasta - Mustn’t Patricia Sweetow Gallery 77 Geary, Mezzanine San Francisco, CA 94108 The show runs from November 1 to December 15th, 2007

POSTED BY ALANNA SPENCE AT 10:25 PM

<http://baartquake.blogspot.com/2007/12/jamie-vasta-at-patricia-sweetow-gallery.html>