

In Los Angeles magazine
Vol. 7, Issue 20 - Nov. 16-29, 2004
ART ATTACK By Philip Hitchcock

DWORA FRIED AT THE ADVOCATE GALLERY

"I have always felt like an outsider...woman-Jew-lesbian, and my art cannot help but reflect that perspective. That is what makes it appealing to the gay community," quips artist Dwora Fried, a self-described "Austrian Jewish lesbian artist with Italian overtones." Her knockout solo exhibition, *Boxes and Collages*, is on view at the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center's (LAGLC) Advocate and Gochis Galleries through January 8, 2005. If the crowded opening night party and brisk sales of her work are any indication of her artistic prowess, this is one exhibition you don't want to miss.

Fried, a graduate of Avni School of Fine Arts in Tel Aviv, Israel, demonstrates her greatest talent in her masterful collage work. In a style similar to David Hockney's Pearblossom Hwy., she weaves together cityscapes by overlapping photographs and aligning them to form complete images. She goes a step further by blurring the boundaries between photography and painting as one suddenly notices that a photo transitions seamlessly into a painting. As viewers, we are confused yet fixated as we gently embrace the intoxicating blur between reality and imagination and slip comfortably, trance-like, into Fried's 21 boxes in the 47 piece exhibit. The "boxes" are glass-sealed, pine shadow boxes, which are like miniature sculptural snapshots. They convey feelings of entrapment and isolation - yet allow us to be voyeurs into the inner workings of fanciful worlds that are narrative, sometimes nonsensical, and frequently damn funny. Who could resist titles like *Leatherman*, *Fist*, and *Bowling for Jesus*? Though the dioramas are immutably fixed, there is an element of movement in each of the boxes, such as a dangling string or chain. This motion, according to

Fried, represents change. "We try to hold on to images or moments, and life moves them. Nothing remain[s] permanent," she says.

Nothing, except maybe Jesus. At least 13 of Fried's current offerings contain the word "Jesus" in the title, and Judeo-Christian iconography permeates much of the work. So why's a nice Jewish girl so preoccupied with Christic imagery? "As you drive through the countryside in Austria," asserts Fried, "you find wayside chapels which are mini prayer stations for hikers and motorists," she says. "[They] dot the landscape and are imprinted on my brain. [But] Jesus on the cross never held the same awe for me. As a child of Jewish Holocaust survivors, I learned at an early age that Jesus was of help to a restricted number of people, and I was not one of them." Insightful and liberating, Boxes and Collages will leave you feeling energized.

The Advocate and Gochis Galleries are part of the Lily Tomlin Jane Wagner Cultural Arts Center.