

Joyce Kozloff: 7<sup>th</sup> & Flower Metro Station, LA

"The Movies: Fantasies and Spectacles," Los Angeles Metro's Seventh and Flower Station, Commissioned through Los Angeles County Transportation Commission's Art for Rail Transit Program; Gannett Fleming/Dworsky and Harry Weese & Associates, Los Angeles, Architects; photos Adrian Velicescu

The format in both murals is of an unfolding filmstrip at eye level that lures the viewer up close and carries him/her along the corridor, "reading" frame by frame.

"Fantasies" catalogues forms and characters in science fiction/horror films. It contains ten "chapters," each approximately 10' long, and is mostly black and white like its sources, but occasionally bursts into color. It includes the earliest films ever made, right up to current cinema. It uncovers collective fears, and displays an empathy with its creatures. They are grouped into a morbid anthology of types. These grotesques and aliens are "the other" - they were hairy in the fifties and slimy in the eighties. They represent the phobias of their times: nature gone berserk, technology out of control, plague and contamination. We exorcize our fears through laughter, and there is something funny about this rogues' gallery of beasts and ghouls.

The mural starts and ends with flight: in Chapter I (Flying Monsters), flapping creatures descend on Earth; at the end in Chapter X (Spacemen), we can almost imagine ourselves as those astronauts taking off into the heavens. Throughout the intervening episodes, there are obstacles to contend with. Moving from left to right, the artwork grows increasingly dense as the monsters evolve, becoming mostly human at about Chapters V and VI (Apes and Hairy Monsters) though not necessarily more benign. In Chapters III and IV (Giant Reptiles and Monsters with Big Brains), they stalk us in the streets of cities. Some of them are us in mutation, and some are our very environment, as in Chapter VII (Strange Plants and Insects). The vampires and spooks (Chapter VIII) range from loathsome to campy, and robots (Chapter IV) from streamlined to clunky. But all these big bruisers from the silver screen are reduced down to the scale of early home television.

"Spectacles" is situated across the station, approaching the opposite track. It dramatizes the sheer sensual beauty of movies. If "Fantasies" was composed of portraits, "Spectacles" is a series of landscapes. Ceramic glazes share a luminosity and translucency with celluloid. Its time-honored theme, the elements, is a vehicle for other narratives. Some images stretch across several tiles or disrupt one another; others are juxtaposed in arresting and unexpected

ways, so as to create shifts in storylines that run the gamut from pleasure and ecstasy to disaster and cataclysm.

"Water" is depicted as ice, mist, spray, surf; as erotic, destructive, iridescent, soapy, playful, blinding, torrential; and as a backdrop to the main event. "Fire" starts with a parody of the violence in films, playing on the "firing" of guns, cannons and finally atomic bombs. Then it builds from lit matches, to candlelight, to bonfires, to wars and conflagrations, interrupted by the "smoldering" glances of movie stars and a sequence of lovers burning with passion. "Air" begins with dancers from musical comedies leaping way off the ground, with silly grins on their faces. They start to fall, and we see a series of people hanging from ledges or precipices followed by buccaneers and swashbucklers, jumping from great heights. Gravity finally disappears altogether, and our heroes dance or walk on the ceiling. "Earth" opens with views of the planet from the war room in "Dr. Strangelove" and then descends into lush vistas from period films. The earth becomes drier in a sequence from classic American westerns. As the cowboy myth goes awry, vast stretches of trenches, graveyards, and battlefields appear. Finally emerging from these death scenes, we are presented with some of Hollywood's grandiose visions of redemption.