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ART & DESIGN

Review: ‘Anthems for the Mother Earth Goddess’

By **KEN JOHNSON**

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‘ANTHEMS FOR THE MOTHER EARTH GODDESS’

Andrew Edlin Gallery

134 10th Avenue, near 18th Street, Chelsea

Through Aug. 15

As the invasion of Chelsea by giant glass boxes continues at a breakneck pace, Andrew Edlin is moving on (to the Lower East Side), its small, antiquated building slated for demolition. “Anthems for the Mother Earth Goddess,” a provocatively plaintive group show of temporary murals and one sculpture installation, is the gallery’s last exhibition at this location.

Four paintings in the main exhibition space cover the walls from floor to ceiling. Focused on a futuristic hermaphrodite and a rhinoceros, Kevin Sampson’s visionary “Fruit of the Poisonous Tree” protests almost everything about modern society, including the recent deaths of young black men at the hands of police officers. Brian Adam Douglas’s “The Rain Dogs” is a grisaille, Social Realist-style painting of people piled up in a small boat, with rooftops slightly above floodwaters in the background. In bright, sharply outlined colors, Chris Doyle’s “Everhigher” depicts an absurd utopia of high-rise residential buildings. “Present Tense,” a graphically bold diagram by Rigo 23, identifies the last nations on earth without mandatory maternity leave, one of which is, of course, the United States.

“ChimaTEK: Future Relic,” Saya Woolfalk’s optically dazzling installation in the gallery’s front room, revolves around a female mannequin adorned with jewelry and lace — a New Age goddess figure. Katerina Lanfranco’s “Tomorrow Dreams of Neon” envisions a luminous, post-apocalyptic Eden. Only Peter Fend’s “Olya” proposes a pragmatic idea: a submarine designed to turn ocean biomass into methane fuel.

Sadly, the cumulative feeling of all this is of a kind of urgent helplessness, for no matter what, the building and its murals will soon be nothing but rubble.