



Ed Ruscha *Faith*, 1972. Oil on canvas. 54 x 60 inches.  
Courtesy: John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco.

**Jane Gennaro**  
Rogue Space New York

By **Mary Hrbacek**

Jane Gennaro's art is imbued with a sense of connection to the natural "found objects" she has discovered in the environs of her country home in New York State. Animal bones, insect parts, goose eggs, tortoise skulls and snake skins form the original impetus for a diverse array of collages, assemblages, sculptures and drawings that combine natural items with personal articles such as clothing and bedding. In an intuitive creative process, Gennaro formulates visual ideas in response to the shapes and textures that attract her. This process stirs childhood memories, transforming them into individual yet universal visual narratives. The work delves into the sanctity of nature, the mystery of daily life, death, birth and regeneration.

The *Bones and Egg* series projects a dimension of holiness inherent in the spiritual feeling of the sanctity of life and the natural world. Using white gauze or string, with eggs affixed to canvas, Gennaro creates soft web-like nests usually associated with gestation. This format elicits a sense of promise with the expectation that culminates in birth and regeneration. The hint of gestation evokes a dimension of time in the works. In some pieces, the eggs seem to be trapped as in a spider's web. The group of white wall reliefs, especially the cross format, exude a feeling of purity and holiness usually associated with the silent reverence one feels when approaching a shrine or entering a chapel. The whiteness symbolizes the new beginnings of a tabula rasa. The *Brides of Bone* sculpture, constructed of deer bones and fabric, has a phantom, nostalgic quality of ghostly apparitions glimpsed in moonlight.



Jane Gennaro *Moment Between Notes*, 2004. egg, bone, gesso on canvas. 9 x 12 x 6 inches.  
Courtesy: Rogue Space, New York

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The *Model* series of cutout fashion magazine figures comments on contemporary cultural values. In these works, Gennaro projects the anger she feels at the diminished bodies and sick souls that result from the requisite starvation weight that models must maintain in order to qualify for their jobs in the fashion industry. This expectation of thinness is a modern phenomenon. That these emaciated beings are role models for young girls is anathema to the increasingly liberated, self-actualizing contemporary woman. The artist also performs a monologue called “Feed the Models” during the course of the exhibition.

In the related *Hair and Model* series, Gennaro employs her own hair as lines in her intuitive drawing process that results in an amalgam of abstract flowing visceral organisms. Nervous tension ignites a condition called trichotillomania, in which one pulls one’s hair out, strand by strand. She cites “hair pulling” as a female affliction, but uses this impulse creatively in her drawing procedure.

The *Kinderdraussen* collages invoke the innocence of childhood by recreating the magic and wonder of early “bedtime” stories. In this nostalgic series, Gennaro simulates the aura of fairy tales by employing soft colors, flowers, bees, bones, insects, and eggs fixed on top of Eisenhower era handkerchiefs. To these she adds vintage coloring book graphics of young children busily reading, sleeping or at play. The works tap the power of fantasy to stir the childhood memories that persist within every adult child.

Gennaro’s highly imaginative, inventive art flows from a consciousness of the unity of all forms of life on the planet. She follows her muse, Joseph Cornell, in making narrative theatrical works imbued with a sense of mystery. **M**

Ed. Note:

*High Line Open Studios’ Rogue Space* is located in Chelsea at 526 West. 26th St., Ste. 9E, New York, NY 10001



Jane Gennaro *Shaking the Goose Egg*, 2009. Mixed media on canvas. 20 x 20 inches. Courtesy: Rogue Space, New York