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SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 2017

SIBYLLE PERETTI AT CALLAN CONTEMPORARY



In ancient China they protected the wearer from dragons, but in Victorian England they were worn by mourning widows as symbols of tears. As subtle as moonlight, pearls can be calming, but their allure can make covetous people crazy. In this show Sibylle Peretti alludes to their transcendental charisma to evoke the mysteries of the natural world only, instead of actual pearls, these works are fashioned from a unique type of glass that mimics moonlight's elusive subtlety by shifting color in response to different settings and light sources -- so her usual subjects, misty landscapes with wild creatures and seemingly feral children, appear with a luminous effects that, along with silvery or crystalline highlights, accentuate their dreamlike aura.



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A Nola-based native of Bavaria who has long maintained a second studio in Cologne, Germany, Peretti reflects that nation's ancient legacy of nature mysticism, a sensibility in which both children and wild creatures are seen as imbued with a kind of innocent wisdom that the adult world must respect. In a dreamy wall panel, *Sophie*, left, a young girl seems to be floating in magical mists, a mythic realm of enchanted children and mythic beasts where strands of pearls appear as if suspended in time and space. Related themes appear in *The Land Behind*, above, and in *Silver Flowers*, where a feral child lies in a field of magical silvery blossoms, an effect enhanced by the eerily color shifting glass that responds rather remarkably to changes in the ambient light. In *Wintering*, a fox appears like an apparition in a pale and snowy woods where silvery tree limbs embody the mythic aura of undisturbed wild places.

But the most emblematic work of all may be *Urban Foxes*, top, a cast glass sculpture in which two foxes appear intertwined like sleeping cats with a cluster of crystals nestled in the hollow between their bodies -- a scene that recalls the verses of Rainer Maria Rilke who once wrote of such creatures, "Where we see the future, it sees all time / and itself within all time, forever healed." -Bookhardt / *It Was Such a Beautiful Promise: New Work by Sibylle Peretti*, Through June 25, [Callan Contemporary](#), 518 Julia St., 525-0518.