

Rich tales of Inka Essenhigh

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Inka Essenhigh's earlier body of work fused a personal take on Surrealism with motifs that seem borrowed from animation. Works such as "Mob + Minotaur" (2002), with such strong *anime* and manga characteristics, had some critics refer to it as a kind of pop-Surrealism or Japanimation.

Her recent body of work, however, is of a very different type. "The Natural and the Man-Made" could be defined as spiritual — it's not essentialist and is without doctrines. Gone are the bodybuilders and morphing monsters of her earlier visual vocabulary, and out come the spirits of the visionary and the romantic — a nod to the 18th-century English painter and poet, William Blake.

Essenhigh paints whatever comes into her head on the day. She attempts to work from vague feelings rather than concepts, and her pieces appear to offer an escapism that provides her with a little relief from the world. The gist of the exhibition, which includes five large paintings and four monotypes, is a portrayal of the progression from nature to the city.