

Passion Play

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By [Melissa Stern](#)

Lesley Dills' new work, in paper and bronze, is literally full of the language and imagery of transcendence. Drawing on the words of several writers, but most notably Emily Dickinson, she has created a world in the process of "becoming." Pieces titled "Rapture," "Ecstasy" and "Joy" convey the excitement, passion and terror of a creative existence. The exhibition is simply thrilling



"Ecstasy," by Lesley Dill

George Adams Gallery has mounted the works in a way that allows for careful contemplation. The main gallery space is mostly given over to two large bronze figures. "Rapture" is a huge woman in a billowing dress. The perforations of her dress and body seem benign, and the words "rapture" and "germination" marching boldly up her arms suggest an organic rather than violent state of change. She is accompanied by a dark bronze man hanging on the wall, posed as if jumping rather than falling into space. Entitled "Faith," the figure wears the words of Kafka on his chest: "Was he an animal that music had such an affect on him." A fascinating pairing of sentiments.

Installed along one wall of the main gallery and in a small room, the small bronze and paper figures illustrate the words and sentiments of Kafka, Dickens, Espiru and Dickinson. Interestingly, all but two of the figures in the exhibition are men. The two lone women portray radically different emotional states. The aforementioned "Rapture" is staid and static. Her "sister" piece, titled "Spit/Bite," portrays an upside-down woman thrown, jumping or falling through the air, her mouth expelling lethal-looking bronze sputum. The flip side of ecstasy, perhaps.

It is not a show for every taste. For those who do not relate to words in their art, the show will fall flat. And there are a few pieces in which I felt the words distracted from the image. However, for anyone who loves literature and language, it is a thoughtful and powerful exploration of the visual and verbal language of transcendence.

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Through Mar. 27, [George Adams Gallery](#), 525 W. 26th St., 212-564-8480.