

# Visitations from Creatures of Light

By JASON SILVERMAN

**A**ngels have descended into Santa Fe. Step through the doorway and into the gallery at the Art Showroom at 430 West Manhattan and you will see them, lining the wall, hovering above the floor, gently shimmering.

Without climbing a celestial stairway or sneaking past St. Peter, you can find yourself surrounded by these friendly angels, which have come to town as part of Cynthia Smith Stibolt's latest exhibit, *Equinox Angels: A Visitation*. The show opens at 6 p.m. today with a reception for the artist.

Stibolt has been painting angels for years, but these new angels represent a departure from the bright, detailed watercolors of the past. Like her older works, these angels are faceless (because they have no ego), but graceful forms.

The new paintings, however, are simpler and much more subdued, using silver and gold metallic paint that seems to float above the 6-foot by 30-inch strips of brown paper. Instead of bold, vivid creatures of color, Stibolt's new paintings are peaceful, engaging creatures of light.

She believes that the size and the rendering of these angels more closely mirror real angels than her past work.

Clairvoyants, she said, believe that angels are nine feet tall, and her 6-footers, when hung, will seem that

big. And the shimmering metallic paint gives the angels a feeling of motion, making them seem alive.

"It's only a hunch. I can only tell you about my intuitions, but I think that these are much closer to what angels are really like in the other dimension," she said. "These are more the essence of what angels are really about."

The idea of capturing these graceful, floating creatures with paint and paper is exciting for Stibolt. Through paint, she is in a sense bringing them from a spiritual dimension into a more mundane one.

"These, to me, aren't just paintings," she said. "They become tangible. Once they are in this dimension, then they can go do their work."

The idea to paint these extra-tall angels came to Stibolt as either a strange coincidence, or, as she suggests, with angelic support.

Shortly after her friend had a dream set in a chateau filled with 6-foot tall, Stibolt-esque paintings, Dmitri L. Coromilas, who runs International Artists Management and its art showroom, looked at Stibolt's work and asked her to paint 6-foot tall angels.

She immediately began to work on them, and found that the painting came easier than ever before. She was painting quickly and effortlessly, rendering angels in groups of five, six and seven.

"These paintings were done so fast

that I know that Cynthia the personality didn't do it," she said, adding that she tries to stay out of the way when working. She instead feels that she is an agent through which the angels make themselves felt.

With these new works, she seems to be right. The strong, simple curves of the angels and the metallic paint give the angels life, making them seem poised to lift themselves right off the paper.

That, for Stibolt, is really the idea.

For her, angels have been helpful both in her painting and in her everyday life. With the physical world in crisis, she believes that angels can help solve these global problems. And as modern life becomes ever more confusing, these angels make their presence felt as never before.

"I'm here to help others. These paintings are just a vehicle for service," she said. "With all the trouble in the world, the invisible world and angels are becoming so present. They are here to heal and enlighten and inspire people, to encourage us and show us that we are not alone."

Stibolt also feels that these works transcend culture, class and language. Every religion, while having distinct godheads, shares the notion of angels as messengers who travel between the spiritual and physical dimensions. And thus everyone can relate to the angelic energy.

"The angels are the perfect instru-

ment to go cross-culturally," she said. "They are the communicators. I am delighted to work in an image that brings all people together."

She has found nearly everybody relates to the angels.

Originally from Connecticut, Stibolt came to Santa Fe in 1982 as a traditional landscape painter. Stunned by the huge spaces and mystical light of New Mexico, she found herself unable to paint.

"It was a terrific shock when I came out here," she said. "I felt as big as an ant in this landscape."

But as she became used to looking out her window and seeing forever, she began, she said, to catch glimpses into a fourth dimension. Her studio, built on the principles of sacred geometry, further helped her to tap into this energy, and she began to sense the angelic beings she has painted ever since.

## DETAILS

**Who:** Cynthia Stibolt  
**What:** Equinox Angels  
**When:** Reception 6-8:30 p.m. today  
**Where:** The Art Showroom, 430 W. Manhattan  
**Info:** Through April 7



'Equinox Angel,' by Cynthia Smith Stibolt