

Art

Reviews



“Nessie Does New York”

★★★★★

apexart, through Aug 2
(see Soho)

The organizers of “Nessie Does New York” ask whether it’s the marketing of myth or the myth of marketing that perpetuates the belief in such creatures as Bigfoot, the Loch Ness monster and the slightly lesser-known chupacabra (a nocturnal monster who preys on farm animals in Mexico and Puerto Rico)—but this premise misses the point a bit regarding why the subject is so charming. What’s most intriguing here is that these beings represent the unknown in a world where that idea is all but extinct.

The exhibition offers several different perspectives on these legends. A display case and several wall-mounted shelves are laden with paraphernalia, like a Milton Bradley game called Big Foot. An elevated

pass-through along one side of the gallery features three small, humorous, handmade dioramas, including one of Nessie in a swimming pool. In a back room, monitors play looped compilations of clips—among them beef-jerky and ice-cream commercials featuring the beasts—as well as A&E and *NOVA* documentaries in which hoary-headed men wink knowingly beside crackling fireplaces.

This accumulation of objects and images suggests that while some people have cynically exploited Sasquatch et al. for commercial gain, others have sacrificed lifetimes and fortunes chasing the dream of encountering the mysterious. The perpetuation of these stories is an art form in itself, one that, however tangled up in the market, also feeds a different need—to exist on the edge of discovery.—*T.J. Carlin*

