



'Beasts of Revelation'

D C Moore
535 West 22nd Street, Chelsea
Through Aug. 3

Religious imagination animates a lot of art being made these days but is rarely a topic of serious critical discussion.

"Beasts of Revelation," an entertaining show of 30 contemporary artists toying with biblical and Christian subject matter, is a good conversation starter.

Alexi Worth's allegorically ingenious painting "Arizona" offers a God's-eye view down on a canopy of silvery fig leaves through which a hand is reaching up to pluck one of three green fruits. In another context it would be read as a violation of the Modernist law of flatness in painting. Original Sin and the Expulsion naturally come to mind, while the title directs thought to Arizona's expulsionist immigration policies.

In Roger Brown's cartoonish painting "The Beast Rising From

the Sea," a giant, seven-headed, leonine chimera looms against a sky of scallop-patterned clouds as tiny people on the shore look on with alarm. Ed Paschke's hallucinatory painting of a blond man with pupil-less eyes and a radiating extrathoracic heart has a similarly weird humor.

Joyce Kozloff's "JEEZ," a 12-foot-square painted pastiche of scores of images of Jesus copied from as many different sources, takes a more deflationary approach to Christian imagery, while Jimmy Wright hints at personal experience in "Baptism at Pilot Oak," a small painting of a naked man and a clothed one in waist-deep water.

Angela Dufresne's "Rosemary Magdalene" pictures a woman in a ragged dress on the shore of a wilderness lake. Painted with impetuous bravura on a seven-and-a-half-foot-wide canvas, it exudes a stirring romance while lodging a feminist protest against Christian patriarchy.

KEN JOHNSON