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# Los Angeles Times

Culture Monster

ALL THE ARTS, ALL THE TIME *February 17, 2011* | **6:00 pm**

## Art review: Agnieszka Brzezanska at Michael Benevento Gallery



Agnieszka Brzezanska, who is based in Warsaw, has a captivating Los Angeles solo debut (she's been in at least one group show here) with a suite of manipulated ink-jet prints, three paintings and two drawings. The diverse works layer familiar artistic images associated with spiritual yearning -- whether the free-form dancing of Loie Fuller and Isadora Duncan, the ecstatic starry night of Vincent van Gogh or the dematerialized pure abstraction of early 20th-century art-- onto the scientific awe of a Hubble telescope's intimate views

of galactic outer space. At Michael Benevento Gallery, Brzezanska tops it all off with an infectious Debbie Harry-meets-Bruce Conner projected video; a trio of colorfully silhouetted female nudes becomes a dance-club "three graces" for a post-MTV generation. Saturating their shifting, slithering forms with intense color, the punningly

titled "Blue Movie" brings us back to Fuller's Belle Epoque roots, when the simple girl from suburban Chicago took Paris by storm by dancing in voluminous folds of silk as beams of colored light played across them. The paintings create night skies mostly by spattering creamy, off-white paint onto deep indigo surfaces formed by swirled strokes made with a wide brush. In one, the rudimentary outlines of a man and a woman hover amid the stars, like something from a message plaque affixed to a 1970s Pioneer spacecraft. Those were the first man-made objects to leave the solar system; just in case an extraterrestrial found them, the plaque's drawing might help explain what a human is. The same goes for this work. The spatter paintings and Photoshop prints, which merge exuberant dancers with explosive Milky Way photographs, possess an outwardly naive, almost childlike quality -- although in fact they are anything but. Deeply informed by art's distinctive modern history, Brzezanska makes the human spirit a quirky but physical manifestation of mind.

-- Christopher Knight

Michael Benevento Gallery, 7578 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, (323) 874-6400, through March 12. Closed Sunday and Monday. [www.beneventolosangeles.com](http://www.beneventolosangeles.com)

*Photo: Agnieszka Brzezanska, "Starry Night," 2009, oil on canvas; Credit: Michael Benevento Gallery*