

state of **THE ARTS**

"Angels are here now for the benefit of all mankind to impart peace, lightness, wisdom and the assurance that we are not alone." This is the philosophy and the source of inspiration for painter Cynthia Smith Stibolt's extraordinary show "Angels: Beings of Light" on exhibit at the Judson Gallery until May 23.

Faceless and rendered with sweeping strokes of pink, chartreuse, marine blue and magenta, these are not the angels of the Vatican. There are no chubby Reubenesque cherubs here. Stibolt's watercolor angels shimmer off the paper with golden coronas and ancient Hebrew and angelic symbols of gold cascading down their ethereal garments. They are joyful, energetic, exuberant and full of motion.

Usually depicted as intermediaries between our mortal dimension and that of the afterlife, the traditional mission of the angel is to bring hope and wisdom to mankind. Stibolt views her work as the medium through which the angels can transmit their message of love, beauty and transcendent healing power from the spirit world to our own. "I'm here to help others," she says. "These paintings are just a vehicle for service."

Stibolt started out as a landscape artist on Martha's Vineyard. A spiritual person, angels had not been of particular interest to her, merely an intriguing image she experimented with in quick brush strokes to the delight of her fellow guests at a party.

Feeling the need for change and newness in her life, Stibolt began to feel a "spiritual prompting" to move to New Mexico. She took heed and moved there in 1982.

"I was stunned by the huge open spaces of New Mexico," she said. "And the mystical light; it was a terrific shock. I felt as big as an ant in this landscape."

She built a studio, taking the time and trouble to ensure that the land, sacred ground that had never been built upon, would accept the building.

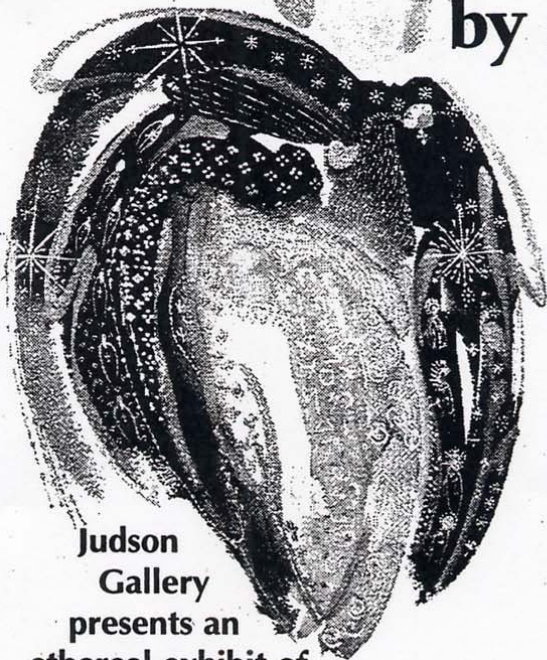
"We asked the spirit world to accept and recognize this building so that they would come to help."

Together with her architect, the contractor and an Indian elder,

Touched

"The Angel of the Past" (watercolor)

by an angel



Judson
Gallery
presents an
ethereal exhibit of
artist Cynthia Smith Stibolt's work

Kathleen August

WHAT: "Angels: Beings of Light"

WHERE: Judson Gallery, 200 S. Avenue 66, Los Angeles

WHEN: Tue.-Fri., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sat., 12 to 4 p.m., through May 23

COST: Free

INFO: 213/255-0131
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made of Mexican tin, each enclosing a small cross made by a New Mexico artist with a votive candle and a small angel painting by Stibolt as the backdrop.

Currently working on a series called "The Elders," inspired by the Native American elders of New Mexico, Stibolt finds that her angel painting strikes a chord with people.

"People usually go straight to the piece they want without hesitation," she says. "The angels seem to speak personally to individuals or resonate to certain desired feelings." ♦

Stibolt saw to it that the Santa Fe studio was built in accordance with sacred geometry, a kind of western version of feng shui, aligning the building in order to connect it with another dimension, like a portal for energy to come through. Chartres Cathedral is a famous example of sacred geometry.

In the center of the ceiling of her studio, Stibolt had a skylight built. It is directly under this where she paints and she has a panoramic view of the mountains, from which she also draws inspiration.

"I paint quickly and horizontally," she says. "I deliberately try to scramble my brain while I'm working so my ego won't get in the way."

To this end, Stibolt listens not to the soft, mellow strains of New Age music, but to Brazilian jazz and artists like B.B. King and Diane Schorr. "The accelerated beat of jazz tunes you in at a higher frequency," says Stibolt. "I need to get into a state of joy, then I can really work."

It is fitting that "Angels: Beings of Light" should be on exhibit at the Judson Gallery in what used to be a classroom for students learning the art of stained glass. The large room, with its high ceiling and two-story, stained-glass window and skylight, lends itself perfectly to the subject of Stibolt's work. Included in the showing are "niches"