

'COSMIC RABBITS' EMPHASIZES CYCLICAL RENEWAL: EXHIBIT OPEN THROUGH

By: Rachel K. Hindery

In Kristin Meller's *"Cosmic Rabbits,"* joie de vivre and mortality coexist rather than conflict. Triton College is exhibiting *"Cosmic Rabbits"* through November 11 in the J-Building Art Gallery, Room J-107.

The gallery is open **Monday through Wednesday, between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. and Thursday between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.**

"In the West, we tend to have a rather solemn and grave and sometimes depressed idea about life and death," Meller, a French artist, said. "You can't live with that all the time. That will warp your happiness and reduce the potential that you have for expansion, for imagination and for joy."

Aztec culture offers an alternative perspective, where life, death and rebirth are seen as a continuous cycle. An Aztec manuscript, the *"Codex Borgia,"* <https://utvac.org/sites/files/vac/codex-borgia.pdf>, showed Meller how "we can actually convey concepts with images."

Rabbits, which have different cultural meanings, are to Meller symbols of fertility and imagination. They're also included in the *"Codex Borgia."*

Each life, connected to preceding generations, is part of "a very long cycle," and "the idea was to join those two [life and death] together and to show that we're in a lifecycle that will end with death, but to say that after death, life continues."

Sequences show different points in this cycle, including "bush" – which focuses on the need for food and protection, and "dream" – in which the subconscious is seen as equally important: both "almost too much" and "quite therapeutic."

"In most of the sequences, there is a binary relationship, and so they're [two rabbits are] facing each other and they're opposites." This is shown through color, too. In "bush," a red rabbit hides among green grass, facing a green rabbit hiding in red grass.

While alive, "the rabbit is always facing sideways, and he's always in movement," Meller said. "In life, we're always moving; always going somewhere; always doing something."

"That is in opposition with the ideas of stopping and meditation and being in perfect harmony, ideas symbolized by the binary rabbits facing each other," she added. "And so, the 'life' rabbits convey a paradox: each instant is both an end in itself and part of a long, constantly changing process."

The rabbit's death is "almost a liberation, because the particles can then go anywhere," Meller said. Her relief prints show the rabbit becoming part of the desert, the water, the moon, and other inanimate objects.

While there is no longer the balancing of two rabbits here, there is the "theme of death leading back to life," Meller said. "Not the same rabbit, of course, but the life cycle becoming renewed."

You can view Meller's work online at <http://www.kristinmeller.com/>.

