



Debi's (Teenage) Theosophical Enlightenment

There's a classic idiom that warns about looking at the world through rose-coloured glasses, the cautionary narrative being that the subject has an unrealistic sense of optimism. As frivolous as it may be, there's something to be said for viewing the world through a chromatic tint, and if not just a flirty pink, then why not powder blue, lemon yellow, dramatic purple, fiery orange, or a leafy green? What if by choice, we could briefly harness the emotional energies of a coloured lens to view our world through?

In *Debi's (Teenage) Theosophical Enlightenment*, Deborah Edmeades invites the viewer to perceive a history of cosmological ideas through six acrylic panels shaped like 18th century signage. Dreamily installed throughout the gallery, the chapters beckon the viewer to move through both physical and metaphorical time and space, sharing the perspective of teenage Debi as she time-travels through six historical scenarios from the Enlightenment era.

Intricately carved with filmic lighting gels, Edmeades sketches various tableaux and symbols, tracing the major figures, threads, and events which—within the cracks opened by the shrinking hegemony of the Church—allowed the esoteric to be re-discovered and then re-invented for a newly secularized landscape. Depicting artifacts such as the Egyptian pyramids, to William Blake's famous depiction of Jacob's Ladder, to the cheesecloth apparitions of early 20th century seances, each sign, a new chromatically tinted signifier, attempts to make sense of the material through organizing it via correspondingly coloured binder tabs.

If looking through the rose-tinted panels informs a naive perspective, then the kaleidoscope of chromesthesia that each sign conveys enlivens an already storied history of humanity's exploration into transcendental enlightenment—and all you have to do is gaze into the work.

— Lauren Lavery



Checklist

Debi's (Teenage) Theosophical Enlightenment, 2023

Liberty, Fraternity, Equality (Pink)

Enlightenment Freethinkers: blasphemers, pantheists and neopagans (orange)

Wisdom from the East (Yellow)

Animal Magnetism (Green)

The Hermetic Revival of the 19th Century (blue)

Radical Spirits (Purple)

Hand cut and collaged lighting gels and ink on acetate, acrylic panel and screws, 8ft X 8ft (Dimensions variable)

In The Mirror of Secular Thought, 2023

Pencil on paper, 36 X 36 inches

A Preliminary Demarcation of the Field, 2023

Pencil on paper 21 X 20 inches

My Lifetime Goals Statement, 2023

Pencil on paper 16 X 20 inches