

## Masculine energy

There's more exhilaration over at LaMontagne Gallery, where painter Alexia Stamatiou offers up "The Call to Adventure!" The show is explicitly erotic and wonderfully playful, with many of the paintings showing abstractions of ejaculating penises. Little red-lipped happy faces, bedecked with tiny chapeaus, often float in the mix.

The format reminded me of Mexican retablos, folk art paintings depicting saints. The project also conjures lingams, representations of male energy found in Hindu temples. It has that clarity of purpose, cutting through a heap of societal fetishes in order to celebrate masculinity's joyful, life-giving essence. Hooray for that!

In "La Petite Mort (blue apotropaic magic)," the male genitalia are electric blue, with the tiny happy faces blinking throughout. The ejaculate is a small fireworks display. Anchoring the piece is a vividly blue eye, in which tiny skulls float - the Greek or Turkish evil eye, worn to ward off evil.

The happy faces show up in grids in "La Petite Mort (cosmogonic drips)," and that same visage appears as the head of a slender, Marcel Marceau type fellow who embraces a naked lady in another series, "Love." She's clearly having a good time, but he curiously comes across as sexless. With all this powerful masculine energy throughout the exhibit, where is our hero's?

