

Tenaflly artist turns to the past to create magical, surreal worlds.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2011

THE RECORD

 [PRINT](#) | [E-MAIL](#)

Wednesday through Oct. 28, Manhattan

COSTA RICAN DREAMS

When Christopher Columbus landed on the coast of what today is Costa Rica, he was so in awe of the impressive gold ornaments worn by the Indians that he had to write a letter to the monarchs of Spain. When **Tenaflly** artist Irene Christensen saw these same artifacts inside the Gold Museum in San Jose, she was so in awe she created a collection of paintings and drawings on rice paper and accordion books. Her exhibit, "Metamorphic," will be on display in Chelsea.

TELL ME MORE: A native of Norway, Christensen began studying art more than three decades ago at the Art Students League of New York. Her work is surreal, as she creates dreamscapes of her own inner mythology. But she is inspired by the physical world, nature and ancient cultures and relics. She returned to Costa Rica multiple times to complete this collection of colorful, magical images, which is both playful and reverent of ancient iconography. "I'm inspired by a long time ago, but I bring it up to today, in my point of view," she said. The gold figures she chanced upon in Costa Rica — a king, a frog, a butterfly — became the springboard for these finely detailed figures. She also created a large oil painting inspired by the country's numerous volcanoes. Her work has been exhibited from Brazil to Belgium. It has also been shown at the Bergen Museum and the [Paterson Museum](#).



QUOTE: "In Irene Christensen's paintings, art becomes a magical act. Her sinuous images repeat, loop in on themselves and are transformed into words and images in poems." — Art critic John Zeaman, regarding a show at the Bergen Museum

DETAILS: Opening reception 5 to 8 p.m. Wednesday. Gallery hours: Tuesday through Saturday noon to 6 p.m. Atlantic Gallery, 135 W. 29th St., Suite 601. For more information, call 212-219-3183 or visit atlanticgallery.org.

— Sachi Fujimori