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To create boar, bison, and horses for her 2011 Primitive exhibition at Redbud Gallery,

A Brujas' Mystical Art: Becky Soria

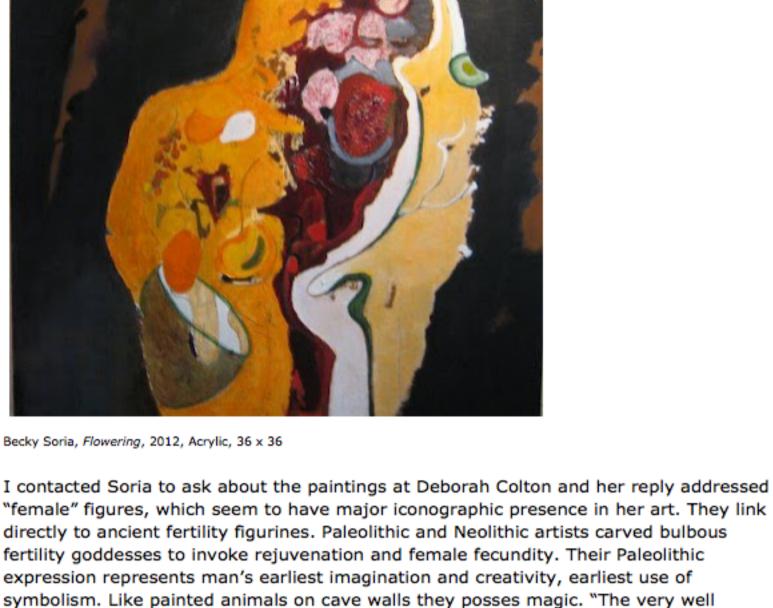
Becky Soria borrowed from Paleolithic cave paintings. The voluminous animal in Bison

Altamira cave. Soria looked closely at the Paleolithic painters' handling of red and yellow other to formulate the animal's body, and at how the uneven surface of the cave wall enlivened it. In <u>Horse</u> Soria referenced the spotted hide of the 14,000 BC horse in France's <u>Pech-Merle</u> cave. When she presented *Primitive's* eighteen works of art exactly a year ago, Soria said she was intrigued by their faded plasticity, as well as by the potential of using it to establish her own modern idiom. About cave paintings she added, "I sought to capture their mood" and in this she succeeded. She translated primitive vocabulary with varying

thicknesses of vermillion, glittery crimson, and magenta interrupted by black, blue and

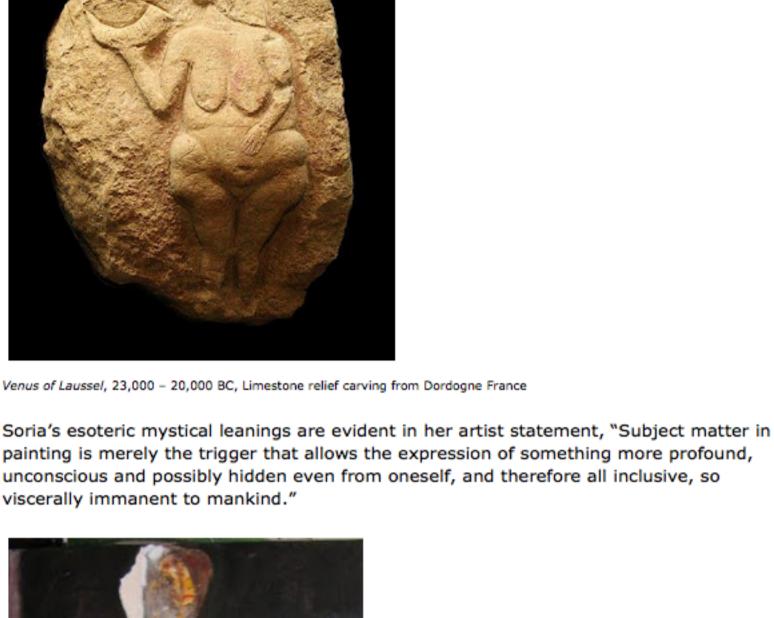
appears in profile with its head down similar to its source, a 15,000 BC bison in Spain's

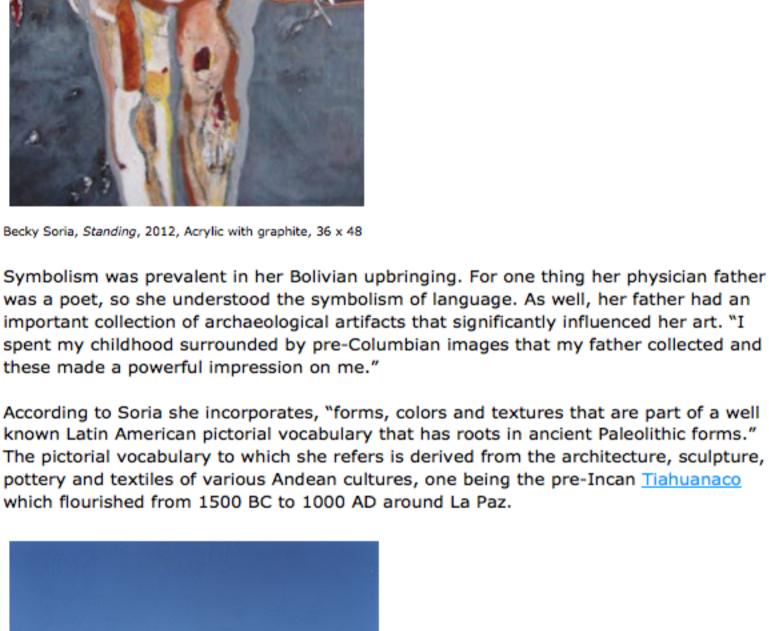
green acrylic. Her colorful painterly abstraction has energy and emotion. Soria's five painted abstractions of the human figure in the Body Talk exhibition at Deborah Colton Gallery through August 18 indicate there's more going on than capturing a primitive mood. Body Talk's figures are totemic. Just as Paleolithic cave artists assigned magical properties to painted animals, through abstraction Soria invests human forms with symbolism and bespeaks the mystical.



because it makes the connection between the Female and the Bison.

known Paleolithic carving of the Venus of Laussel," Soria told me, "is important to me





Tiahuanaco is not the only pre-Inca Andean culture on which Latin American pictorial vocabulary is based. Chimu from the northern coast of Peru is another. Like Paracas and other indigenous cultures, Chimu artists skillfully made textiles, the Chimu Mantle being a fine example. The mantle features abstracted natural forms such as pelican and

tuna fish motifs in bright reds, yellows, blues and brown set against rectangular

designs. Chimu culture Soria pointed out, like others, had fertility figurines.

Carved stone stelae – monumental statuary in the courtyard at Tiahuanaco

Chimu Mantle - textile from Peru's northern coast, 1000-1476 AD Those rectangular geometric designs in the Chimu textile represent an important stylistic element in Latin American artistic expression. Rectangular shapes seem to color

relief carvings, and statuary such as the Tiahuanaco stelae. I observe rectangular

shapes in the bulky columnar Moche statue on my coffee table, that weirdly primitive form beneath a fan shaped head which perhaps references a feather head dress. Soria

Peruvian mummies - Nazca burials at the Chauchilla cemetery

only way to see the lines of Nazca. From the air it's easy to spot the fantastic monkey, the dog, the human figure with a rectangular space helmet-like head, and other early Nazcan images rendered with distorted linearity. As on textiles and pottery, natural



forms speak symbolically.

organic flavor. But it is directed by an inner vision. When I asked Soria which post conquest artists influenced her, those she listed employ the primitive to speak symbolically: Maria Luisa Pacheco, Arnal, Wilfredo Lam, Picasso, Fernando Casas, Anselm Kiefer and Bacon. I'm reminded of a film artist's assessment that Francis Bacon's squishy distorted figures have faces eaten up by something that comes from within. I also recall Cezanne's description of himself as a primitive with a new vision.

Soria believes there is another important factor informing her art. She studied biology and has a love of science, and spent a great deal of time looking at her father's crystal

collection. The irregular forms she paints, especially human ones, have a distinctly



Nazca Lines, Peru, The Monkey

Labels: Becky Soria, painting