

Review: 'Cryptic' clearly connects Goya and modern works

By Ivy Cooper, special to the Beacon

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"the Flower" 2010, Allison Schulnik, Oil on canvas stretched on board 24x30 inches.

"Cryptic: the Use of Allegory in Contemporary Art with a Master Class from Goya" at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis is a nicely wrought exhibition, forging connections between the despairing, black humor of Goya's prints and the work of contemporary artists who share his sensibility.

On view are prints from *Los Caprichos* (1797-98) and *Los Disparates* (1815-23), the series of etchings done toward the end of Goya's life, as he suffered equal parts ill health and rank pessimism toward his fellow human beings.

The prints are technically unparalleled, atmospheric and expressive; and they present devastating critiques of human folly.

The contemporary artists, including Folkert de Jong, Hiraki Sawa, Allison Schulnik, Dana Schutz, Javier Tellez and Erika Wanenmacher, engage to varying degrees with Goya's own approach, but all the works offer the chance to reflect on allegories, their rich rhetorical expressions and their potential for criticality.

When: Through Aug. 14

Where: Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, 3750 Washington Blvd.

Information: 314-535-4660, www.camstl.org