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AROUND THE GALLERIES

Playing around with pictures

■ David Askevold's Cibachrome prints resonate simultaneously on multiple levels. Also, Ginny Bishton, Laura Mosquera.

By Christopher Knight, Times Staff Writer

Women in a vulnerable state

Chicago-based artist **Laura Mosquera** is one of a number of young figurative painters who turn moderate, sometimes even clumsy drawing skills to unusually effective ends. Her L.A. solo debut at sixspace shows mostly women in abstract environments, seemingly in a state of suspended animation.

Mosquera paints or draws the environments and clothing as flat, linear patterns. A reclining figure in a blue-striped shirt has no actual lower body, just a lime-green shape that fills in the blank. A woman at a window clasps awkwardly drawn hands that, rather than being hidden by an artist aware of her technical limitations, are emphasized by "jungle-red" spots of crimson nail polish. Another woman is shown reclining on a bed, the wiggly blue dots and lines on the pillow behind her rising like bubbles from a scuba diver's air-tank.

About three dozen figures populate the show's five latex and acrylic paintings and nine ink or graphite drawings. Almost all the women are depicted looking away from us, or else their eyes are closed, downcast or averted.

This compositional device is cinematic, used in movies to suggest intimacy between a singular subject and a mass audience. It transforms a viewer into an odd type of voyeur — the self-conscious observer of situations that, in Mosquera's case, are neither sordid nor sensational but refreshingly vulnerable.

sixspace, 549 W. 23rd St., L.A., (213) 765-0248, through March 19. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

image above: *In the Waiting Line*, 2005