



*"Chimera" (detail), 2014, Stas Orlavski, Wall drawing, collage, stop-motion animation, and sound by Steve Roden. Post-production by Beau Leduc. Photo: courtesy the Artist.*

Entering the PMCA's project room mid-stream of Los Angeles-based Stas Orlavski's multi-media installation, titled *Chimera*, may not be all that different than viewing the animated projection from the beginning. The cyclical layering of abstract and representational hand-drawn images and lack of overt narrative rendered any traditional notion of "beginning" and "end" obsolete. Instead, the multi-media installation—which includes an sound track by fellow Los Angeles artist Steve Roden—is rather like a dream sequence, where a series of images, ranging from botanical specimens and landscapes to sketchy oceanic motifs to abstract geometries, slowly build up, becoming increasingly complex, until an abrupt shift starts the cycle over once again. For inspiration, the artist cites a variety of source materials, including Hungarian textiles, Soviet-era Russian children's books, Victorian scrapbooks, and Japanese prints which is perhaps most overtly referred to in the succession of roughly hewn crashing waves, à la Hokusai's *Great Wave*.

In ancient Greek mythology, the chimera refers to a composite creature: part lion, part goat, and part dragon. In genetics, the term refers to a living organism that contains at least two different sets of DNA. Here, the term may refer to the cross-pollination (so to speak) of the dual projections that take place on adjacent walls in the otherwise austere gallery space. The "main" focus, or the larger of the two projections, plays over a trio of collaged female silhouettes (one an overt reference to Picasso's *Demoiselles*); while on the other wall a depiction of an old-fashioned oval mirror on a stand seems to reflect images from the "main" story line—but not quite. Instead of an accurate reflection, it becomes apparent that the two story lines exist in dialogue with one another. The melancholy of each is palpable, reinforced by the Roden's atonal eclectic composition. Standing between the two projections, the viewer becomes a third-party character, a witness of this negotiation, and is reminded of the inherent distortion offered by reflections, memories and dreams.