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Louise Despont: 'Tide Fulcrum & the Motion of Fixed Stars'

By KAREN ROSENBERG

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327 Broome Street, between Chrystie Street and Bowery,

Lower East Side

Through Jan. 20



Louise Despont's drawings cherry-pick abstract motifs from various ancient cosmologies, coaxing them together with delicate strokes of graphite and colored pencil. They evoke astrolabes, zodiac charts and the work of the Swiss artist-healer [Emma Kunz](#), though they lack the visual and spiritual clarity of Kunz's pendulum drawings.

Ms. Despont draws on pages from antique ledger books, which are interesting in their own right. She fills the sheets with neat, diagrammatic arrangements of floral starbursts and overlapping diamonds, her gentle shadings of pencil punctuated by the occasional dot of copper leaf. Often the graceful longhand of the ledger books is visible beneath the

layers of drawing; their rows of numbers work with Ms. Despont's patterns to conjure mystical calculations.

The [exhibition](#), which inaugurates the gallery's lofty new space on Broome Street, feels overpacked; it could have done with fewer of the smaller, paired drawings, which become repetitive.

The big works, however, are ambitious. One of them, "Serpens," transposes a Greek constellation onto an intricate Persian rug design. Green snakes wriggle across a rust-colored geometric background. Large images of stringed instruments, flowering gardens, and the head of Medusa anchor other multisheet drawings, lending some welcome order to Ms. Despont's multifarious, pantheistic and generally bewildering universe.