

# DENVER Westword Calendar

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## Elena in Wonderland

By **Susan Froyd** Thursday, Feb 23 2012

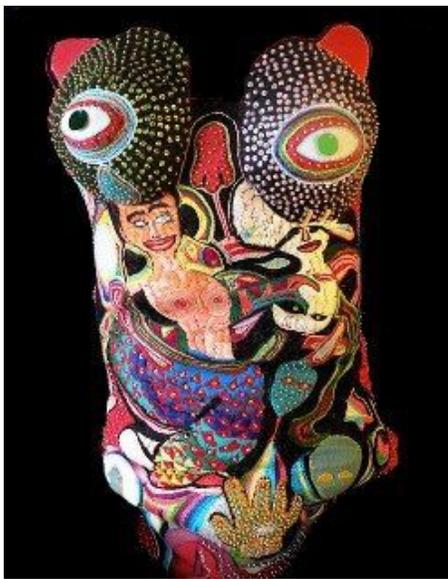
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**Elena Stonaker** seems to come from a long line of secret fairies and sprites. Or maybe it just appears that way from her symbol-speckled, organic drawings and soft sculptures. The latter -- hand-embroidered dolls and creatures decorated with seed beads, sequins and something else (dream dust?) -- will be the focus of Stonaker's half of a new show, *Celestial Terrestrial*, which opens tonight at Hinterland gallery and also includes work by **Jeff Page**. Make no mistake: While they're not overtly evil-spirited, there is nothing sweet or darling about these dolls, especially the giant-sized new ones Stonaker is making for this display. They're more like deep yet playful sacred power objects, walking evidence of magical goings-on between the lines of our everyday lives.

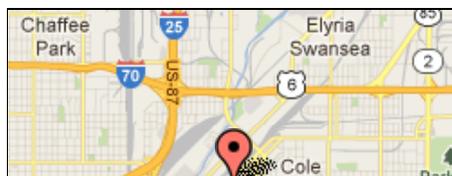
Making them, Stonaker says, is "like giving birth: You never know what your child is going to be like. It's like having an intimate relationship with these dolls, when I work on them so many hours." And they do take on a life of their own, she adds: "They channel feelings about things in a way we can't quite do as humans. They encourage magical, hopeful, escapist things -- a change of consciousness into more whimsical, beautiful thought processes. It's like creating a new mythology."

Plus, they're damn beautiful. See Stonaker's dolls at the reception from 6 to 11 p.m. at Hinterland, 3254 Walnut Street; the gallery will also be open from 6 to 10 p.m. on First Friday in March. Go to <http://hinterlandartspace.com> or call 720-309-1764.

Feb. 24-March 16, 2012



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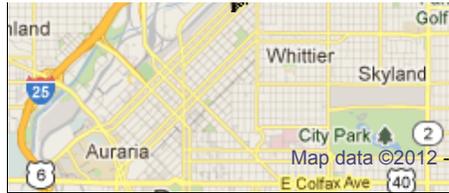
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