

**By Lance Esplund**

'Alice Federico' George Billis Gallery(511 W. 25<sup>th</sup> St. 212-645-2671)Through Dec. 20

In Alice Federico's third solo show at George Billis, she continues to explore, and to reinvent, the classical Greek vase form in works roughly 18 inches high. Her slender, stately ceramic vases - brown, cream, green, or gun metal amphorae with wide lips, long necks and feet, and curved, swelling bellies - occupy that realm between functional object and sculpture. In this recent body of work, however, Ms. Federico has incorporated unusual handles. Sometimes decorative, sometimes practical, the handles give lift, haughtiness, personality and pomp-and-circumstance to her graceful hourglass forms. The handles take on a range of associations. Many are symmetrical come-hither curves that add hands-on-hips punctuation. Others zip like lightning, pour slowly down the vases' sides, or extend like flying buttresses. Others still, resembling bowties, leaves, cauliflower ears, fluttering ribbons, braids and wings add whimsical notation and Baroque flair - at times elevating or steadying the vases' necks like attending winged putti. Ms. Federico's vases evoke classical antiquity; her handles bring those forms into the here and now.

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