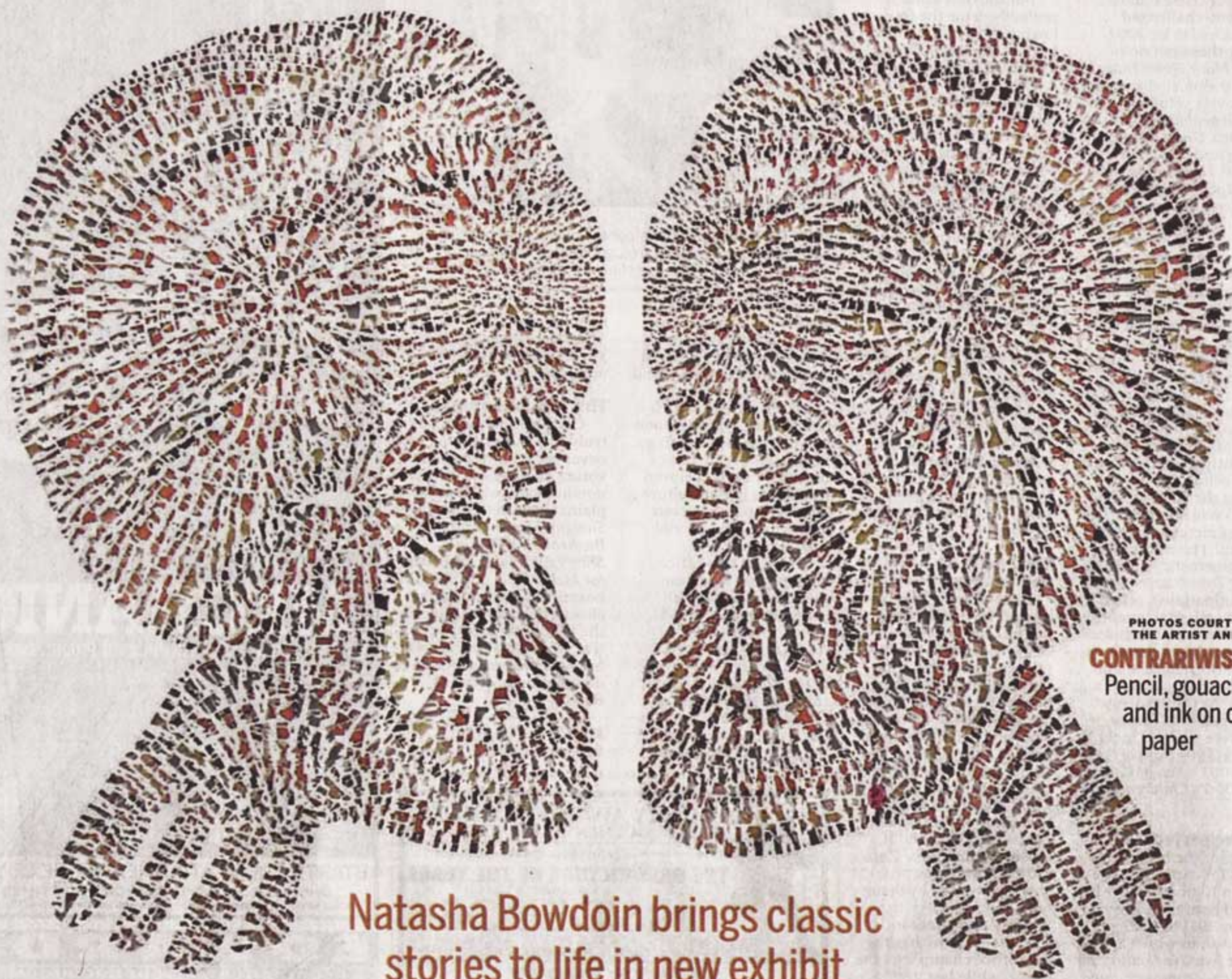


A LITERARY VISION

THE TALE OF THE TIGER



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND CTRL

CONTRARIWISE: Pencil, gouache, and ink on cut paper

Natasha Bowdoin brings classic stories to life in new exhibit

By DOUGLAS BRITT
ARTS WRITER

CTRL, a Midtown art gallery, has spacious enough quarters that it usually mounts two solo exhibitions at once. But proprietor Bryan Miller has turned the entire space over to Natasha Bowdoin, a Houston artist whose talent is as sprawling as her show.

Bowdoin, 29, proves she deserves the real estate in her first Houston solo outing with dazzling cut-paper drawings that achieve a type of literary time travel. While Bowdoin came of age during the Internet boom, her sources include authors from the golden age of print such as Lewis Carroll and Jorge Luis Borges, whose

EYE ON ART

NATASHA BOWDOIN: IMPLAUSIBLE TIGER

■ **When:** Through Feb. 19
■ **Where:** CTRL, 3907 Main; 713-523-2875.

words she laboriously transcribes to make shadow-box versions of illuminated manuscripts that defy easy reading.

What materializes are stylized figures — tigers, leopards or, in the case of *Contrariwise*, two heads representing Carroll's Tweedledum and Tweedledee characters. They emerge from layers of drawn and painted imagery; often their lacy, labyrinthine compositions are defined by swirling, intricate patterns of text hand-cut from paper.

Borges' prose-poem *Dreamtigers*, which describes how a childhood fixation on tigers gave way to an adult dream life haunted by "impure," "implausible" or "all-too-fleeting" versions of the majestic beast, inspired many of the works in this exhibit. A dense writer capable of conjuring whole worlds in a few pages, he's an apt touchstone for Bowdoin, who seems to have woven entire novels of elusive meaning into her most ambitious pieces.

A charming group of loosely executed drawings offer relief from the large works' fanatical complexity and rounds out a confident exhibiting by one of the most exciting artists working in Houston today.

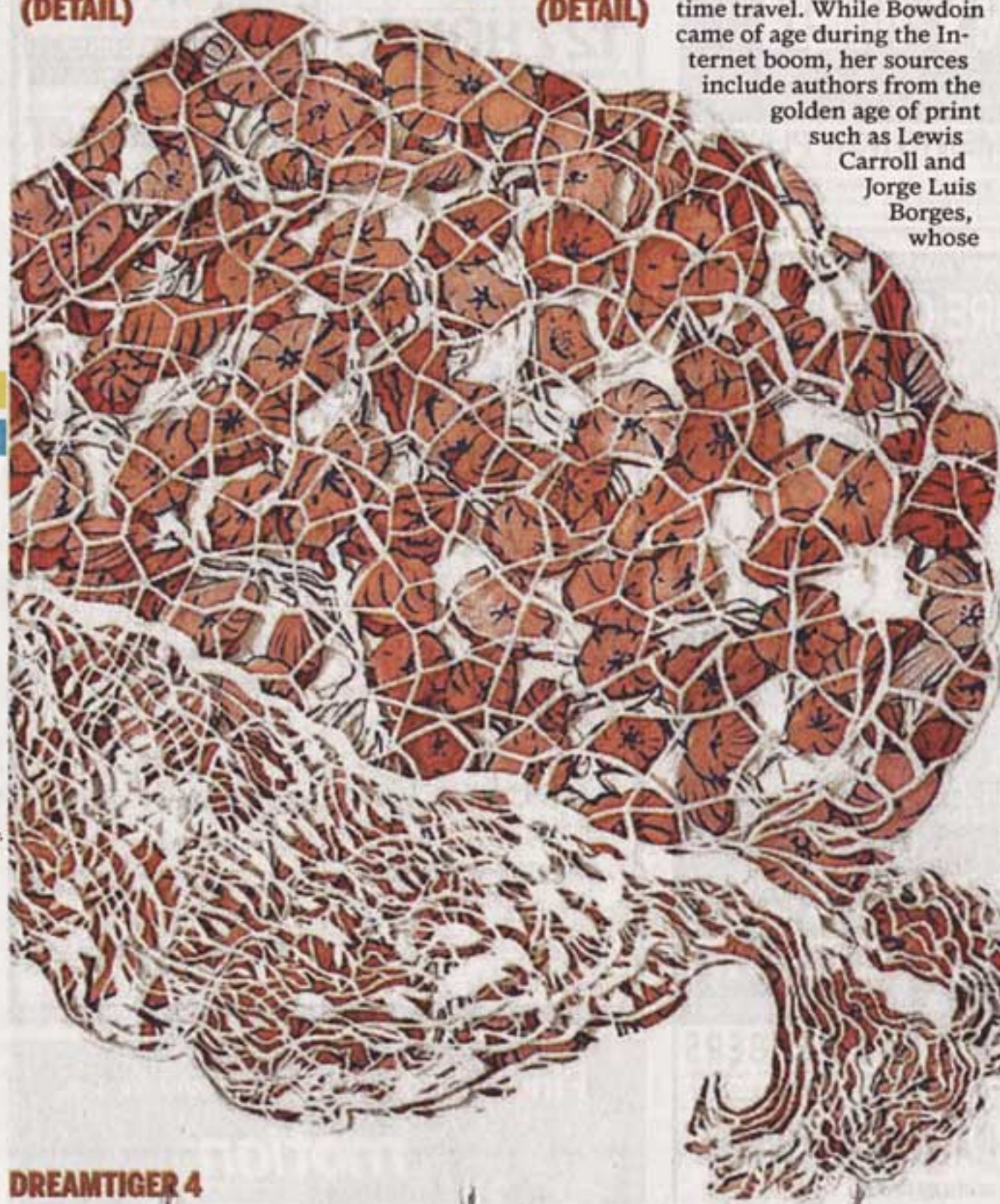
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CONTRARIWISE (DETAIL)



DREAMTIGER 4 (DETAIL)



DREAMTIGER 4



I WANT TO LIVE ON AN ABSTRACT PLANE



SEE IN MY FACE, I'LL TRAVEL THROUGH SPACE



I WILL BE FERVENT, I'LL BE OBSERVANT



BORGES' LEOPARD

7 8 9 10 11 12