Spark Gallery opens the new season with two impressive shows

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September exhibition slots are coveted by artists because they're the first shows of the new season. But there are so many strong shows that have just opened — or are about to — that it's hard to keep track of them all. In all the excitement, I didn't want to overlook the co-ops, so I checked out the two member shows at Spark Gallery (900 Santa Fe Drive, 720-889-2200, **www.sparkgallery.com**), and I came away impressed.

The front space at Spark is usually subdivided into two distinct rooms, but for the current pairing, the movable walls have been pushed back, and the area functions as a single gallery. The work of each artist is so distinct, however, that the two presentations retain their individual autonomy; they are **Angela**

Larson: Vanishing, installed in the east half, and **Michaele Keyes: Pursuing Motion** in the west. Vanishing is made up of a series of panels with geometric compositions that incorporate script. The writing, mostly in English but also in Arabic, includes passages by Rumi, a medieval Persian poet. These paintings look like glazed ceramic tiles but are actually done on wooden panels that have sometimes been coated in plaster and encaustic. Interestingly, though Larson has crammed them with narrative meaning in the form of the script, their overall effect is extremely simple — just some lines and bars floating beneath the shiny surfaces.

The compositions in Pursuing Motion are much more complex, and with palettes that are often fairly strong, the result of the soy-based inks that Keyes uses in her monotypes; trained as a painter, she turned to printmaking more than a decade ago. For these works, she intended to convey the idea of motion, and the compositions of several do seem to have the potential to twirl. Many, including "Expansion" (pictured), are densely composed, with Keyes employing recognizable things like leaves along with simple marks in order to create all-over abstractions.