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Kim Dingle

Born in 1951 in Pomona, California, Kim Dingle lives and works in Los Angeles. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from California State University, Los Angeles (1988) and a Master of Fine Arts from Claremont Graduate School (1990). Dingle was included in the 2000 Whitney Biennial, and her work appeared in the major group exhibition "Sunshine and Noir: Art in L. A., 1960-1997," at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek (1997), which traveled to several institutions in Europe and the United States. In 2000, Dingle took an unintentional hiatus from painting when she opened a restaurant in the middle of her studio called Fatty's & Co., a successful vegetarian restaurant in Los Angeles, which she sold in 2013. Recently, she opened a Wine Bar for Children at Coagula Curatorial, Los Angeles (2013-2014) (and was never arrested), and had a solo exhibition at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects (2017). Among public collections owning her work are the Denver Museum of Contemporary Art; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Seattle Museum of Contemporary Art; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Dingle had her first solo show at Sperone Westwater in 1998 and subsequent exhibitions in 2000, 2007, 2012, and 2018.

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Kim Dingle
Selected Press

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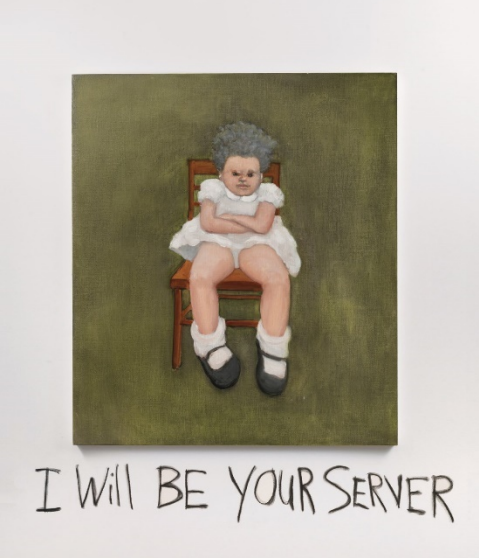
Kim Dingle, *The Lost Supper (general maintenance)*, 2006. Oil on mylar, fifteen panels; 90 x 72 in. (overall). Courtesy of the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.



I Will Be Your Server (The Lost Supper Paintings), installation view, Vielmetter Los Angeles, Culver City, California, March 2-May 4, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.

The French word précaire indicates a socioeconomic insecurity that is not as evident in the English term precarious; indeed, précarité is used to describe the condition of a vast number of laborers in neoliberal capitalism for whom employment (let alone health care, insurance, or pension) is anything but guaranteed.
—Hal Foster, Bad New Days: Art, Criticism, Emergency

There are two alarms in Los Angeles: short, pulsating screeches for an earthquake and long hoots for a fire. I have never heard the former—a blessing that verges on pathology, a hanging fruit gone overly ripe. Over time, the threat of disaster constitutes the disaster itself. It's been 25 years since the San Andreas Fault's last major movement, a 6.7 on the Richter scale that hit the San Fernando Valley in the middle of the night in 1994. My childhood home, they told me, smelled like barbecue sauce. Like notches on a ruler, or a bedpost, periods of time lacerate themselves against the Californian. One precarious metronome often births another: like the sound of a skateboard on a sidewalk, a year without another earthquake shoves the Angeleno into the ever-greater probability of the next Big One. I hear a skater go by outside, dreading the misstep. *Ka-dunk, ka-dunk*. He stops, and my temporal matrix lurches.

My dreams have gotten worse since I started hostessing at a literally "high-end" restaurant downtown—the one at the top of the tallest building in Los Angeles. If you're from a fault line, you know the ritual: What building would you least like to be in when it happens? We know how to look above us for power lines, telephone poles, eucalyptus trees. Recently, I have begun to feel like working at the 1,000-foot-high restaurant is akin to being inside God's Jenga. The collapse, be it mental or physical, is unquestionably imminent—if not already upon us. One night in my sleep, a party of eight showed up unannounced. In another, my manager asked me, *what are you thinking?*, and I stared back blankly, unable to tell him that my legs had turned into a sludge the color and weight of our mushroom entrée. Working in a restaurant is to live on the edge of emergency, a breed of which no one can understand until they've walked in a large circle for six hours handling the requests of the gluten-free. Or, more realistically, working in a restaurant is to live inside a disaster of both personal and political proportions—a disaster that has happened, is happening, and will continue to happen.

Artist and former restaurant owner Kim Dingle captures something of the deep end of precarity: the service industry.

Dingle's 2019 show at Vielmetter Los Angeles, *I Will Be Your Server (The Lost Supper Paintings)*, is an extension of an earlier undertaking that began while Dingle was still running a restaurant called Fatty's in Eagle Rock—the establishment closed its doors in 2013. She began producing work inspired by the "urgency, drama, and brutal stress of Fine Dining" for a 2007 show, *Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty's*, at New York gallery Sperone Westwater.[1] Dingle weaves a captivating web around the origin of the paintings at Vielmetter. The work, she says, was "lost" after being stored in pizza boxes following the close of the restaurant. (The large-scale paintings are comprised of smaller squares of vellum seemingly taped together, each square roughly the size of a pizza box.) Over ten years later, Dingle's paintings were unearthed from storage and put on view. This whimsical narrative sets the tone for the exhibition, which is both Seussian in its playfulness and indicative of the self-compromising onslaught of work in the service sector.

I Will Be Your Server (The Lost Supper Paintings), installation view, Vielmetter Los Angeles, Culver City, California, March 2-May 4, 2019. Background left: *Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty's (Wine Bar for Children II)*, 2007. Vellum framed in powder coated welded aluminum, diptych; forty panels total, 77 1/4 x 243 1/2 in. (overall). Background right: *Watermelon Martini*, 2006. Oil on vellum, sixteen framed panels; 77 1/4 x 96 1/2 x 1 in. (overall). Courtesy of the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.

What circumstances led an established artist to "lose" her paintings? The answer may lie in Dingle's furious depictions of her "fat white-frocked everygirls" in a fancy dining establishment. Whirls of white socks and tumbleweeds of hair fill each canvas as the girls vault between positions as servers and as customers, destroying (and getting destroyed by) everything around them. In *Watermelon Martini* (2006), girls line up along a dinner table, some in chairs, some falling off of them. Blooming white dresses stand in contrast

with the brown skin of some of the girls—it's a self-consciously diverse group—but many of them are also headless, their faces replaced by more carefully painted green glass bottles and a single pink martini glass. It's like a bomb went off in a Catholic day school and our truants broke into the *Vin Santo*. Dingle revels in ambiguity, but not ambivalence—her girls are violent, playful, overwhelmed, servile, cute, and raucous. Though her work's subject matter lives in a politically rife, underrepresented, and overpopulated corner of the socioeconomic world—the hospitality industry—its message is far from didactic and resists easy summation. Dingle's girls were raised on the clock and under the whip, and their reactions to the omnipresence of control are satisfying (*f*ck you, I'll do what I want!*) while still suggesting a kind of looming, powerful darkness that dictates their every move. Dingle's young girls play as they work and work as they play, pushing the paintings towards a terrifying and gleeful realization of the *précarité* of contemporary life.

Kim Dingle, *Table Tipping*, 2005. Oil on mylar, fifteen panels total; 90 x 72 in. (overall). Courtesy of the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer

One of the paradoxes of Dingle's work lies in her relation to her subject matter—as a restaurant owner, she is the de facto capitalist, possessing enough surplus to start a business and employ members of the wage-earning class. Writing for Yale's *Post45* on the "painful repetition" of service work, John Macintosh speculates that "those in a position to represent their experience are atypical not only of the restaurant industry, but the service sector as a whole."[2] Surely Dingle occupies this "atypical" category as an artist who, as she says, "accidentally opened a full service restaurant in the middle of my studio in Eagle Rock."[3] Dingle's small operation demanded of her a plethora of tasks that would normally fall to non-stake-holding employees: the artist says she was responsible for "wine and janitorial."[4] Small business owners like Dingle take financial risks in order to get their establishments off the ground—a kind of risk that strictly binary assumptions of capitalist v. proletarian often fail to acknowledge.[5] Dingle's young girls offer a similarly loaded ambiguity; they are both privileged, messy customers and waitresses driven to the brink. Her figures are anti-work and anti-play, compelled by an un-fun desire for workaday destruction. While Dingle remains a member of an exclusive class of individuals who can employ others, she still manages to capture much of the truth of restaurant work. Her efforts to evoke the mania of the hospitality industry through anarchic female toddlers suggest that waitress, owner, and even customer may be possessed by the same impulse to *blow it up*, all of it—the time clock and the payroll, the entrée and the appetizer.

Upon entrance to the gallery, a scowling, gray-haired girl peers down at the viewer (*I WILL BE YOUR SERVER*, 2005). The titular phrase is scrawled in a ghoulish, horror-movie typeface directly on the wall. The text is an inextricable (and presumably un-monetizable) part of the show: it cloaks the gallery, a shrouded declaration that infuses every work in the exhibition. The gray-haired "server," complete with Dingle's characteristic white frock, matching visible underpants, and black Mary Janes, replicates and dissipates across the paintings—she never appears again with such clarity. In *Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty's (Wine Bar For Children II)* (2005), a crowd of girls sits at a dinner table with their backs to us. Their faces are depicted with strikes of black paint, their dresses gashes of white. It is no longer clear if these girls are indulging or assisting in dinner service: one figure appears to bend over a chair as though to push it in for a guest, while another bearing her same uniform sits propped on a stool, drinking from a martini glass. The girls' ambiguous actions indicate a comic confusion of play and work, an aesthetic

category dubbed the "zany" by critical theorist Sianne Ngai. Typified by characters like Lucy Ricardo of *I Love Lucy* (1951–57) and Jim Carrey's role in *The Cable Guy* (1996), the zany suggests the "exhausting and precarious situation" demanded of workers in post-Fordist capitalism, where "the concomitant casualization and intensification of labor" results in a "paradoxically entertaining failure to be joyful."[6] Dingle's *Wine Bar For Children* (also the name of her 2013 exhibition at Coagula Curatorial) turns a space for working adults with dispensable income into one for children. The "casualization" of labor means that working looks a lot like playing, and vice-versa. Yesterday, a friend told me that at IBM the term *work/life balance* has fallen out of favor. In its place is the almost too-perfect Ngai-ian *work/life integration*.[7] Think team-building exercises, "emailing," work lunches, and board retreats. Work has transcended the now desirable 9-to-5; we are 24/7, 365. Even the epitome of un-work—the child—finds herself getting a glass of fifteen-dollar Pinot with the girls. In Dingle's world, everybody needs a drink—even toddlers.

Kim Dingle, *The Lost Supper (cherry rickey)*, 2007. Oil on mylar on panel, nine panels total; 54 x 72 in. (overall). Courtesy of the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.

Ngai's aesthetic of zaniness refers to a rising archetypal figure in late capitalism as well as a stylistic or formal quality in works of art. If the zany contests "the stability of any formal representation of personhood by defining personhood itself as an unremitting succession of activities," then Dingle's furious brushstrokes

Kim Dingle, *The Lost Supper (janitorials)*, 2006. Oil on mylar, twelve panels total; 72 x 72 in. (overall). Courtesy of the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.

leave her girl right where she should be: unrealized and caught in the flurry of constant event.[8] In *Table Tipping* (2005), a brown table and glasses are painted starkly, while billows of white, black, and brown are all that remains to suggest our familiar girls. *The Lost Supper (cherry rickey)* (2007) shows five figures facing the viewer. The exact position of each girl is unclear, as they appear to be in the midst of movement; one figure stands on her chair, her dress flung behind her, while her arm appears to merge with the appendage of the toddler sitting by her side. Their brown hair and skin seem to bleed into the canvas, creating brackish clouds over the dinner table. Dingle's diverse casting is sometimes unrealistically utopian, conjuring a world where non-white and white girls suffer the exact same punishments for public misbehavior: self-destruction. The roughly hewn, activity-centered paintings emphasize the effects of late capitalist zaniness on every figure at the expense of distinguishing the different (and more fatal) ways service work affects women of color.[9] It is as though the near-deadly bacchanal of their workplace/playground—what's the difference?—has deteriorated the outlines of their faces and bodies, be they what Dingle calls "Van Dyke brown" or "pinky white."[10] Constant work and event seem to overtake and ultimately define each girl, a process that seems to apply not only to Dingle's characters but also to Dingle herself. The rushed, motion-oriented paintings manifest the movement of the body demanded by restaurant work. Dingle's brushstrokes imply the artist's gesticulations as immediately as they evoke the girls she depicts; I can imagine Dingle handing menus to customers or explaining a dish with the same actions she performs with a paintbrush in hand. The loose and frantic brushwork that typifies Dingle's style is emblematic of a larger condition within contemporary life, where "unremitting activity" is increasingly concomitant to the self.

The collapse of personhood under the work-or-play regime persists throughout Dingle's work, where objects of the restaurant interpolate the girl until she crumples into the easel. On first glance, the paintings appear to be fun, expressive romps through the gardens of consumption—before we realize that whoever led us to our table is near-dead, her face mottled and her dress askew. In *Chocolate Batter* (2005), a figure pours black liquid out of a large blue bowl that obscures her face and body—all we see are her bare, chubby white legs. Here, objects of food service swell with precision and clarity while the girls are obliterated, their faces flicks of paint on canvas. This is true across the exhibition: bowls, cakes, bottles, and wine glasses are painted starkly when compared to the evocative gestural style used to depict Dingle's young girls. In the last room of the exhibition, we are greeted with the refuse of a dinner service, girls absent—save one. In *The Lost Supper (janitorials)* (2006), a girl collapses into a yellow mop bucket, either stuck or too exhausted to move. Soap suds cover her body, their color mingling with the white of her dress. The effect is haunting: as much as we want to dismiss the girls as playful and uninhibited, here she is literally drowning in work, covered in it, *becoming* it. Yet almost more striking are the paintings where she is absent. *Untitled (Dinner Plate)* (2005) features three tall stacks of white plates, which appear to extend beyond the canvas in all directions. The painting is surprisingly stark and minimal for Dingle: each plate is confined within its own clear margins, piled neatly on top of another. *The Lost Supper (general maintenance)* (2006) is messier, showing tubs of frothy water and food-covered plates spilling over the edge of a dish pit and into

three trash cans. While the workers are almost absent, the work is not: the seemingly endless clean-up of the dinner implies a staff that does not need to be actually imagined in order to be present. The metonymy is complete: Dingle's girl is interchangeable with stacks of plates and murky water—her toddler face and body become one oversized blue bowl.

Kim Dingle, *Untitled (Dinner Plate)*, 2005. Oil on canvas, 72 x 60 x 1 1/2 in. Courtesy of the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles. Photo: Jeff McLane.

Dingle's work lets us imagine a skintight precarity that hinges on a type of self-obliteration in an environment defined by constant work, work that increasingly looks like the most desperate, vicious form of play. In psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott's 1965 theory of psychosis, the psychotic "breakdown" is defined by "a failure of a defense organization"—the "defense organization" being the formulation of the ego and the self, an organization that is infantile and shapeless in the moment of crisis.[11] Looking at *The Lost Supper Paintings*, Dingle's girls seem more and more akin to working women who wear their girlishness like a mask, compelled into childhood by a hospitality mandated of dinner guests and waitresses alike. Dingle's dangerous girls are always women, already women—women *because* they work, not in spite of it. Their occupation of a myriad of roles—server, janitor, drinker, eater—suggests the collapse of any environment free of what is demanded by the workplace. Dingle's paintings show us Winnicottian psychosis in brackets, figuring the restaurant as a place that reduces adults to an "infantile and unformed" state.[12] Her infants are made to work like adults—to "happy-hour" like adults—and in turn her presumably legal employees act out infancy for the tipping populace. In this way Dingle shows us, finally, that precarity is democratic in its subjection: nobody is left unscathed. In fact, nobody is even left alive.

John Macintosh argues that repetition is the quality of service work that makes it so hard—even boring—to render, leading to a strange dearth of imagery for an experience so common to the young American worker. He proposes "service as a holding pattern," a place cordoned off from the world, outside of which life happens.[13] He's right. Dingle's paintings feel, sometimes, strangely niche. The exhibition at Vielmetter mimics the plot of a three-course dinner: we meet the girls (appetizer), we see their violence (entrée), and we see its effects (dessert). The consequence of this is to leave the gallery with the notion that the story has ended, *fin*. Perhaps this is Dingle's lavish cruelty: to imagine service work as a pattern that withholds the promise of a future to its participants. This is what makes precarity so unspeakably difficult to represent: it is life lived in the cul-de-sac of meaning, propelled by the mandates of living (joy, work, children, food) but without the security and stability necessary for flourishing. It's also what makes Dingle's work so fascinating; paradoxically fun and fatal, her paintings evoke girlish frivolity while imagining genuine brutality and total anarchic destruction. If words like precarity imply a level of balance or on-the-edge suffering, Dingle's work explores the real world of precarity that is *already* a disaster—disaster in the everyday, disaster in the *how can I help you* and the *have a good night*. *Say thank you*, I remind myself as a party of four gets into the elevator. I say it, and then I say it again. The "animated suspension" of a working

life is experienced as a genre of mounting emergency and, in Dingle's paintings, it is depicted as such.[14] *The Lost Supper Paintings* are a nightmarish trip down reality lane.

Claudia Ross is a hostess from the San Fernando Valley.

Footnotes:

1. Sperone Westwater, "Press Release: *Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty's*," 2007, https://www.speronewestwater.com/images/Dingle_2007_Press_Release.pdf.
2. John Macintosh, "Painful Repetition: Service Work and the Rise of the Restaurant Novel," in *Post45*, Issue One: Deindustrialization and the New Cultures of Work (January 2019), http://post45.research.yale.edu/2019/01/painful-repetition-service-work-and-the-rise-of-the-restaurant-novel/.
3. Kim Dingle, "Press Release: *I Will Be Your Server*," Vielmetter Los Angeles, 2019, https://www.vielmetter.com/exhibitions/past/595/pressrelease.html.
4. Carolina A. Miranda,"How Ed Sullivan, girls gone wild, an alligator and blindfold painting shaped the art of Kim Dingle," *Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 2017.
5. Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliot (Brooklyn: Verso, 2017 [2005]), 7. Boltanski and Chiapello explore some of the (lacking) reasons for the motivations of the capitalist, which Dingle's work dissects via its depiction of mass destruction of the "fruits of labour" and the infrastructure created by surplus put into a business. "In many respects, capitalism is an absurd system: in it, wage earners have lost ownership of the fruits of their labour and the possibility of pursuing a working life free of subordination. As for capitalists, they find themselves yoked to an interminable, insatiable process, which is utterly abstract and dissociated from the satisfaction of consumption needs, even of a luxury kind."
6. Sianne Ngai, *Our Aesthetic Categories: Zany, Cute, Interesting* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 10, 188.
7. "Work/Life Integration," University of California, Berkeley, Haas School of Business, 2019, https://haas.berkeley.edu/human-resources/work-life-integration/. "We use the term Work/Life Integration instead of Work/Life Balance because the latter evokes a binary opposition between work and life. In fact, the traditional image of the scale associated with work/life balance creates a sense of competition between the two elements. Work/Life Integration instead is an approach that creates more synergy between all areas that define 'life.'"
8. Ngai, *Our Aesthetic Categories*, 193.
9. Annie McClanahan, "Introduction: The Spirit of Capital in an Age of Deindustrialization," in *Post45*, Issue One: Deindustrialization and the New Cultures of Work (January 2019), 3-4.
10. Kim Dingle and David Pagel, "Kim Dingle by David Pagel," in *BOMB* 52 (1995), https://bombmagazine.org/articles/kim-dingle/. "The Van Dyke brown that I use for the black children punches up the meaning and it punches up the color. I need it for balance, just like in life. But visually—materially in the painting—I need it too. The white girls are pinky white with white dresses on white backgrounds—they don't show up." Where to begin with this quote, which was Dingle's only explicit, verbal articulation of race in her work that I could find? Her words imply a relationship to race that is naively aesthetic and willfully ignorant, where non-white characters are overtly used to "punch up" meaning in her paintings. But her paintings insinuate what her words do not: a dark reality where the consequences of late capitalism affect all of her girls regardless of race, breaking them down until their faces become eddies of white, black, or brown. Still, I find that I cannot shake her words to Pagel.
11. Donald Winnicott, "Fear of Breakdown," *International Review of Psycho-Analysis* 1 (1974): 103–6.
12. Winnicott, "Fear of Breakdown," 103–6.
13. Macintosh, "Painful Repetition."
14. Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 195. "A situation is a genre of living that one knows one's in but that one has to find out about, a circumstance embedded in life but not in one's control. A situation is a disturbance, a sense genre of animated suspension—not suspended animation."

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Love Mooney-Martin, Lucia. “Muscle Memory: Kim Dingle talks about her Blindfold paintings with Lucia Love Mooney-Martin.” *www.artcritical.com (artcritical)*, 1 March 2018.

artcritical

Installation shot of the exhibition under review, Kim Dingle: Painting Blindfolded, at Sperone Westwater, 2018

In case anyone is wondering if the title of this show is metaphorical, Kim Dingle has actually chosen to create an entire body of work blindfolded. These gestural, immediate, expressionistic compositions are formed by a few sweeping brush strokes dashed across Plexiglass panels, mostly in black and white, with the occasional accenting fleck of a primary color. But while the title is literal, the action of taking a brush to these industrially uniform surfaces without the aid of sight is nonetheless a meditation on where knowledge is stored.

For most of Dingle’s career, the artist has been known for sculptures and images of a pugnacious little avatar she has named Priss, a character inspired by her niece whose formative years were a pendulum swing between prim Sunday special attire, and head banging flights of havoc. Unfortunately, when an artist becomes known for some specific content, they often feel obligated to produce visually related material in perpetuity. As a joke about feeling the pressure to maintain continuous mechanized production to feed this media leviathan, Dingle tells me, she would exclaim to friends, “I’ve done these Priss works so many times already, I could do them with my eyes closed. I could do them blindfolded… oh. Wait. Is that true? That’s an idea! I will do them blindfolded!”

The result of this initial frustration eventually gave way to emotional discovery. “When I take the blindfold off, the first thing I do is laugh with relief. Nothing comes out right. The girl’s socks are off to the side, and well, that dress is floating a little high. Each piece is a challenge, but I end up showing every one.”

Kim Dingle, *Untitled (not to worry)*, 2017. Oil on Plexiglas, 51 x 41 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater

This all-inclusive attitude comes from an experiment put forward by Tom Hatten, a television personality from the 1950s. As host of the Popeye Show he staged a contest where kids were invited to draw a squiggle that Hatten was then required to transform into a character. If he was unable to do so, the squiggler won a free bike. Usually, however, through free association, he found something within the kiddy abstraction. This stuck with Dingle, who now believes that every move is imbued with the possibility for recognition. As a poetic gesture, the artist has also been writing blindfolded on an iPad. While the writing is illegible, upon inspection some intonations arise from the garbled text. Fingers miss their mark on the keyboard, but the rhythm of speech is still evident. This led Dingle to muse upon the underlying muscle memory guiding all physical expression. “The thing about muscle memory is that I can’t be blindfolded and expect to paint Picasso’s Guernica. His figures aren’t within me. I haven’t practiced that dance. But I could imagine the composition, and make my own Guernica, with my girls.”

Muscle memory is formed through habitual repetition and is stored in the cerebellum, way back behind our verbal centers. It is this subconscious experience that David Salle prizes in the seasoned painter. In “How To See” he argues that time spent in repetition enriched the output of painters like Alex Katz and Malcom Morley. Their practiced movements smoothed with the confidence of a lifetime of committed depiction.

For Dingle it is remembering the steps of a dance that resonates through her fully intuitive process.

According to Professor Patrick Haggard (of the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience in London) when a ballerina commits a routine to memory, proprioceptive cognitive ability runs its course. This is an automatic function of the brain. It receives signals automatically about the physical makeup of each moving part of the body, and creates a spatial model of it within our subconscious mind in order to navigate. This activity in the cerebellum is heightened for anyone who periodically runs the same physical routine.

As a final barrier to her conscious, verbal mind hijacking a state of free figuration, Dingle makes sure to occupy her frontal cortex with some trashy talk radio. “I can’t listen to any heartbreakingly beautiful music while I’m making these paintings. It would distract me from becoming distracted, send me down a river of feeling.” Much of this process of stripping away the usually integral senses tied with viewing art seems tied with eradicating socially elicited emotions. After decades of living with Priss, Dingle has made her way to the deepest memory center of her mind, the one that can operate without rational calculations of audience approval or shame.

Yau, John. “Painting by Touch, Not by Sight.” *hyperallergic.com (Hyperallergic)*, 28 January 2018.

HYPERALLERGIC

“Kim Dingle: Painting Blindfolded” at Sperone Westwater, installation view (images courtesy Sperone Westwater)

Kim Dingle is an artist with a history of working under preconceived constraints.

Priss showed up in the art world in the mid-1990s. She was a feisty, anarchic bundle in a white dress and Mary Jane shoes, her Sunday best. Simultaneously three and 30 years old, she looked determined to punch you in the nose if you got close enough. In some manifestations she wore black-framed glasses. Other times she didn’t. She had a friend who looked exactly like her, but her skin was brown. I remember one work where she had pulled up her dress to show off her tattoo. When Priss is in 3D, she is usually standing in a crib. In paintings, she gets into fights, runs with a posse, and causes trouble.

In an interview conducted by Carolina A. Miranda that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* (November 8, 2017), Kim Dingle talked about the origins of Priss:

> I was in the old LACMA [Los Angeles County Museum of Art] … in the American wing, and I was looking at these paintings by limners. Before photography, limners went around the country and they painted portraits of people. Limners were no Rembrandts. They were really bad. You’re sitting in your farmhouse and you haven’t seen anyone for a month and then this limner comes along and says he will paint you. They all have these stony faces. And the one thing I noticed about

> limners is that when it came to children, they took adult heads and shrunk them down to the size of a walnut and put it on a little body.

"Kim Dingle: Painting Blindfolded" at Sperone Westwater, installation view

Much to her chagrin, Dingle is probably best known for inventing Priss. Her exasperation led her to make the work featured in her fifth New York exhibition since 1994, *Kim Dingle: Painting Blindfolded* at Sperone Westwater (January 10 – March 3, 2018). In her conversation with Miranda, Dingle revealed that the idea for this exhibition came to her while talking with her Los Angeles dealer, Susan Veilmetter during a studio visit. Expressing her resistance to doing any more paintings of Priss and her friends, she declared: "I could do these blindfolded." Around the tenth time Dingle said this, she knew what she had to do:

> It was a technique and a challenge. You are using your senses and every fiber of what you know. You use your hands. You use your touch. It could have been such an utter failure.

The idea of working under a preconceived constraint and following through on it is something that Dingle has done before. In 1990, she did a series of map paintings based on other people's memories, outlining silhouettes of maps on a loosely painted monochromatic ground. The painting's titles tell all: "Maps of Canada drawn from memory by American citizens" and "The United Shapes Of America, (As Drawn From Memory By California Grad Students)" (both 1990).

Dingle has made different bodies of work using found materials, ranging from a gumball machine to sepia-toned photographs of children. She has designed wallpaper and made installations, some of which involve enlisting young children to paint on the wall. Children, violence, and race have been recurring subjects throughout her career, but – and this one reason I am a fan – she always seems to do something unexpected. She has never settled for a brand: no butterflies, spots, or other signature motifs for her.

In a recent group of paintings, which were not included in this exhibition, Dingle painted on OSB (Oriented Stand Board), a kind of engineered lumber. She used the visible strands and shapes found on the surface of the compressed layers to determine where she put the paint. The focused determination she brought to the arbitrariness of the variegated surface sets loose all sorts of thoughts and associations.

Whatever medium Dingle uses, her approach calls to mind Sol Lewitt's manifesto, "Sentences on Conceptual Art" (1969), which includes these statements:

> Irrational thoughts should be followed absolutely and logically; If the artist changes his mind midway through the execution of the piece he compromises the result and repeats past results; The artist's will is secondary to the process he initiates from idea to completion. His willfulness may only be ego.

There is a film of Dingle making the paintings blindfolded, which I did not see. She does them on similarly sized pieces of Plexiglas in black, white, and gray on a gray ground, with strokes of yellow and red. Forms are outlined in either black or white. A dachshund consists of a wide line that goes from a solid color to a dry brush, suggesting that the artist drew it with two or three lines. She might wipe an area out and remake the marks or shape. The paintings seem like they were done *premier coup*, in which nothing is permanently erased: every move is seen.

Willem de Kooning did a number of drawings with his eyes closed. The art historian Richard Schiff has argued that this technique:

> […] allow[ed] de Kooning to circumvent what was for him the more intellectual and regulative organ, the eye, lest it inhibit the more physical organ, the hand.

In 1953, while he was in the army, where he was trained as a cryptographer, Cy Twombly would rent a hotel room when he was not required to be on base and make drawings in the dark. Both de Kooning and Twombly

Kim Dingle, "Untitled (is that a wiener)" (2017), oil on Plexiglas, framed, 51 x 41 x 2 1/2 inches

Kim Dingle, "Untitled (portrait of the artist as a young girl without glasses)" (2017), oil on Plexiglas, framed, 51 x 41 x 2 1/2 inches

wanted to interrupt the bond between hand and eye, and unlearn what they had been taught to do.

L: Kim Dingle, "Untitled (tragedy on interstate 15)" (2017), oil on Plexiglas, framed, 51 x 41 x 2 1/2 inches; R: Kim Dingle, "Untitled (where did you get your shoes)" (2017), oil on Plexiglas, framed, 51 x 41 x 2 1/2 inches

In the most recent works in *Blindfolded*, large drawings done with a brush on the unforgiving surface of Plexiglas, the line seems tender, awkward, and vulnerable, as well as confident, smart and funny. Compositionally, she tries to keep the figures separate from each other to avoid unintentional mashups. Circumvention was the hallmark of the paintings she made based on the memories of others. Although capable of making fluid lines, she committed herself to enlarging and copying awkward shapes to make her map paintings. Her undertakings are sharp, funny, and ruffling. I think she is far more interesting than many of her more celebrated and dependable LA counterparts.

Kim Dingle: Painting Blindfolded continues at Sperone Westwater (257 Bowery, Lower East Side, Manhattan) through March 3.

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Black, Ezrha Jean. “Artillery Best in Show 2017.” *artillerymag.com (Artillery)*, 2 January 2018.

ARTILLERY

Staff Writer Ezrha Jean Black Picks the Top 10 Highlights from a spectacular year of gallery and museum shows

The experience of art in Los Angeles is always both very specific to its localized encounter and acutely conscious of its engagement with the world. As political forces outside California moved to further isolate us in 2017, that dialogue and artists’ sensitivity to the global implications of their work have only intensified. To move through the many memorable art shows this past year in Los Angeles was to feel positioned simultaneously atop a desiccated California riverbed and the cracking Antarctic ice shelf. While many of us reeled into this year in commingled disbelief, dislocation and dejection, the best of these shows looked to a point of consciousness both informed by and well past these dislocations and disruptions. It was a year of both revelatory confrontation and rediscovery, frequently in the same show. Much of the work in these highlighted shows was in preparation long before this past year or even the entire 2016 political year. Nevertheless, each, on one or multiple levels, responded trenchantly to the contemporary moment—even those that looked back to a historical moment long past.

8. Kim Dingle: YIPES
Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects / October 14–November 11

It’s a small world in a chaotic universe—and with an oversized tantrum-throwing toddler in the U.S. capital magnifying the ‘butterfly effect’ to the power of ten, Dingle brought her own ‘Priss’ and trademark companions to wreak havoc with process-as-usual and dig her (their/our) magnificent way out of the cake and into a pre-nuclear dawn.

Kim Dingle, *CRUSH (blue loops, lamps)*, 2016, courtesy of the artist and Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, photo by Robert Wedemeyer

Miranda, Carolina A. “Q&A How Ed Sullivan, girls gone wild, an alligator and blindfold painting shaped the art of Kim Dingle.” *www.latimescom (Los Angeles Times)*, 8 November 2017.

Los Angeles Times

Kim Dingle’s one-woman show at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects features her ferocious little girls — as well as new abstractions. (Carolina A. Miranda / Los Angeles Times)

If the paintings of Kim Dingle sometimes look as if they’ve been attacked by a 6-year-old gone berserk on a sugar high, it’s probably because they have.

The Los Angeles artist is known for creating paintings and installations that feature little girls in feminine frocks wreaking all manner of havoc. For some of her installs, she will enlist the child of a friend to add the finishing touches: a crayon scrawl on the walls, piles of silly string underfoot, assorted bits of detritus. To help unleash the creative juices, Dingle has been known to supply her workers with generous amounts of candy.

“Sometimes I need an assistant,” she deadpans. “A very short assistant.”

Dingle’s unorthodox working methods are on view at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects in Culver City through Saturday, where she is displaying a number of works new and old.

This includes an installation that features her destructive little girls — which she first began making in the 1990s. It also features an assortment of new works, such as her recent “Crush” paintings — a series that functions a bit like a copy of a copy of a copy. The paintings begin as works on glassine, which she then photographs. Then she paints over the photograph to create the final painting. The glassine is then displayed in a crumpled stack on the floor before the final painted work like a postmodern diptych.

In addition, there is a series of abstractions inspired by the patterns of construction boards she acquires at Home Depot.

But perhaps the most sensational pieces are Dingle's "Blindfold Paintings," in which she renders her demonic little girls in broad expressive brushstrokes while wearing a blindfold. (For the doubters: the gallery contains video of Dingle painting with her eyes covered.)

An installation view of Kim Dingle's "Crush" series at Susanne Vielmetter. (Robert Wedemeyer / Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects)

The show at Vielmetter marks another step in Dingle's comeback as an artist.

For a dozen years, she and Aude Charles operated the Eagle Rock restaurant Fatty's, where Dingle says she served as "the director of wine and janitorial." She returned to the art world in 2013, after selling the business, with a show at Coagula Curatorial that she dubbed "Kim Dingle's Wine Bar for Children at Mister Ling's Market." (Dingle has a wicked sense of humor, making acerbic wisecracks about her own work and others. She also likes to refer to Vielmetter, who was born in Germany, as "Kaiser Vielmetter.")

The artist's return has been thus far well received. Times reviewer David Pagel described her show at Vielmetter as "fearless" in a recent review. Certainly, Dingle isn't afraid of trying new things. She took time to chat about how Ed Sullivan and a manicured alligator inspired her work, how she avoids being typecast as a painter and how being blindfolded requires a whole new level of perception.

Little girls in Western painting are often depicted as these placid, innocent creatures. Yours are the opposite. Is your work a reaction to the stereotypical portrayal?

Kim Dingle's "Portrait of Ed Sullivan as a Young Girl," 1990. (Kim Dingle)

I've seen those. It's the nice portrait of the girl with the dog you put on the mantel. But I never really had that thought. My girls are pit bulls.

How did you come to paint little girls to begin with?

I was in the old LACMA [Los Angeles County Museum of Art] ... in the American wing, and I was looking at these paintings by limners. Before photography, limners went around the country and they painted portraits of people. Limners were no Rembrandts. They were really bad. You're sitting in your farmhouse and you haven't seen anyone for a month and then this limner comes along and says he will paint you. They all have these stony faces. And the one thing I noticed about limners is that when it came to children, they took adult heads and shrunk them down to the size of a walnut and put it on a little body.

So I'm looking at this portrait of so-and-so as a little girl and she is standing there with this total old-man face because the limner wasn't any good. And I thought, "Ed Sullivan as a Little Girl." And I put it in my notebook and I carried it around for 10 years. I got to graduate school at Claremont — 1980, 1990 — and I pulled out my notebook. I had wanted to paint it for years but didn't know how to paint it. But I finally painted it.

I laughed so much. It came out really bad. It's Ed Sullivan's face on a little girl with her arms crossed and her hair pulled back really tight so she has the Ed Sullivan hairline. That is a painting I kept.

You often depict girls in the frilliest, most feminine outfits acting totally feral. How did you arrive at that look?

My niece, my oldest brother's little girl, he used to bring her over. She has a blond 'fro, kind of a loose tumbleweed, and brown, beady eyes. I tell her all the time she is the origin of these. She would always be in these crunchy, lacy, mid-thigh dresses that would be so starched. Her dress would be really feminine, but she would have these tantrums. She'd bang her head against the wall. She lacked oxygen at birth, so she has issues. She'd be really feminine one minute and then she'd take off and have these violent outbursts — wearing these ultra-feminine dresses and her Mary Janes. Priss has her hair.

How did you come up with the name Priss?

[The ex-husband of my former gallerist Kim Light] had a vicious alligator and he had painted its toenails pink and named her "Priss" because it was so contradictory to her looks. I laughed so hard when I heard he'd painted her nails with his mother's nail polish. I never met the alligator. But I imagine this alligator's mug right now with its painted nails and its eyes. These girls were like alligators, so it was "Priss."

That was the middle of the '90s. Who knew I'd be stuck with "Priss."

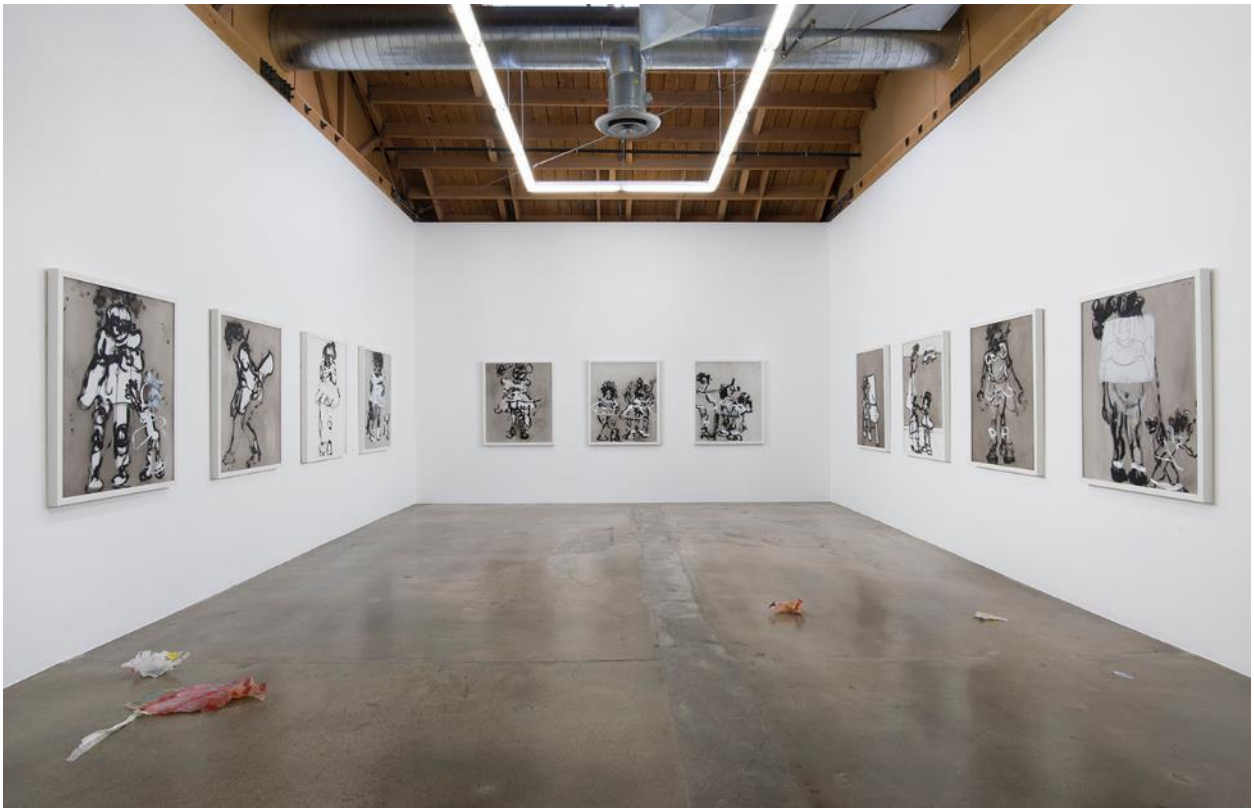
Is Priss an alter ego?

She's a device. It's really the materials that get me going. I want to see how things work, to experiment. I didn't want to do little girls anymore. But Kaiser Vielmetter — that's what I call her — likes the little girls. I wasn't looking to have a show, but she said the most diplomatic thing that a dealer has ever said to me. She said, "Invite me to your studio."

"Painting Blindfolded (ingrates)," 2017, by Kim Dingle. (Carolina A. Miranda / Los Angeles Times)

I wasn't painting little girls. I'd been working on other stuff. I don't want to make what people might think of as a brand. I cannot do a commission. I can't do what somebody might want me to do. It's physically impossible. That is the downfall for so many artists — the art market and too many galleries and all of those things. It's artists thinking, "Oh, they will like this." But what you've done is just jumped on your grief pole to hell.

I complained to Kaiser Vielmetter so much. I heard myself saying, "I could do these blindfolded!" And like the 10th time I said that I was like, "Hmmm. Blindfolded. I better do that." It was a technique and a challenge. You are using your senses and every fiber of what you know. You use your hands. You use your touch. It could have been such an utter failure.



An installation view of Kim Dingle's "Painting Blindfolded" series, which the artist made while blindfolded. (Robert Wedemeyer / Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects)

How did your abstract painting series "Home Depot Coloring Books" come about?

I had built a wall in the middle of the studio and I it was made from OSB [oriented strand board]. It's used in homes and behind drywall. Most galleries have it behind their drywall. I had sheets of them laying around and I'd use them as a table. So I'd been sitting at that table and staring at the patterns of the oriented strand board. It's not particle board. It's strands, these big pieces of wood. And right in the middle of this Kaiser Vielmetter show, I just made them. They took months. You are making decisions every few seconds. It tells you what color it wants to be. It was very meditative for me and the results are really surprising. There is a beauty there. It's a natural order you are finding.

Kim Dingle's "Home Depot Coloring Books," at Susanne Vielmetter in Culver City. (Robert Wedemeyer / Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects)

You've talked about your frustration with being known as the painter who does little girls. How do you avoid falling into an artistic rut?

I've always done abstractions. I've done maps. In the '80s, when I was an undergrad, I was a house painter. [Laughs.] I love art, but I'm not going to do it for the money or to please people, to give them whatever they want. So I have what I call the "Richter Rule."

[Painter] Gerhard Richter was a huge inspiration for me. Apparently, he would not allow someone to show his blurred photorealistic oil paintings unless they also showed his abstractions. I saw an interview with him on YouTube and they asked him something about that and he said something like, "I don't want to be known as the guy who just did the photorealistic paintings."

So I have my Richter Rule. So that's what I do. Kaiser Vielmetter and I, we signed a truce, the Treaty of Versailles. If she is going to show the girls, then we show other things too.

What else are you experimenting with?

I've been working on a painting for a couple of years — under a pseudonym. I can't say the name. It's really just to make fun of these young, white guy, zombie formalist painters. As much as I'm making fun, though, it needs to be beautiful.

And I still have a few more to do of the blindfolded works. I'm going to attempt [Picasso's] "Guernica." I'm going to attempt something that is not a little girl. Except guess what? "Guernica" is full of women and children.

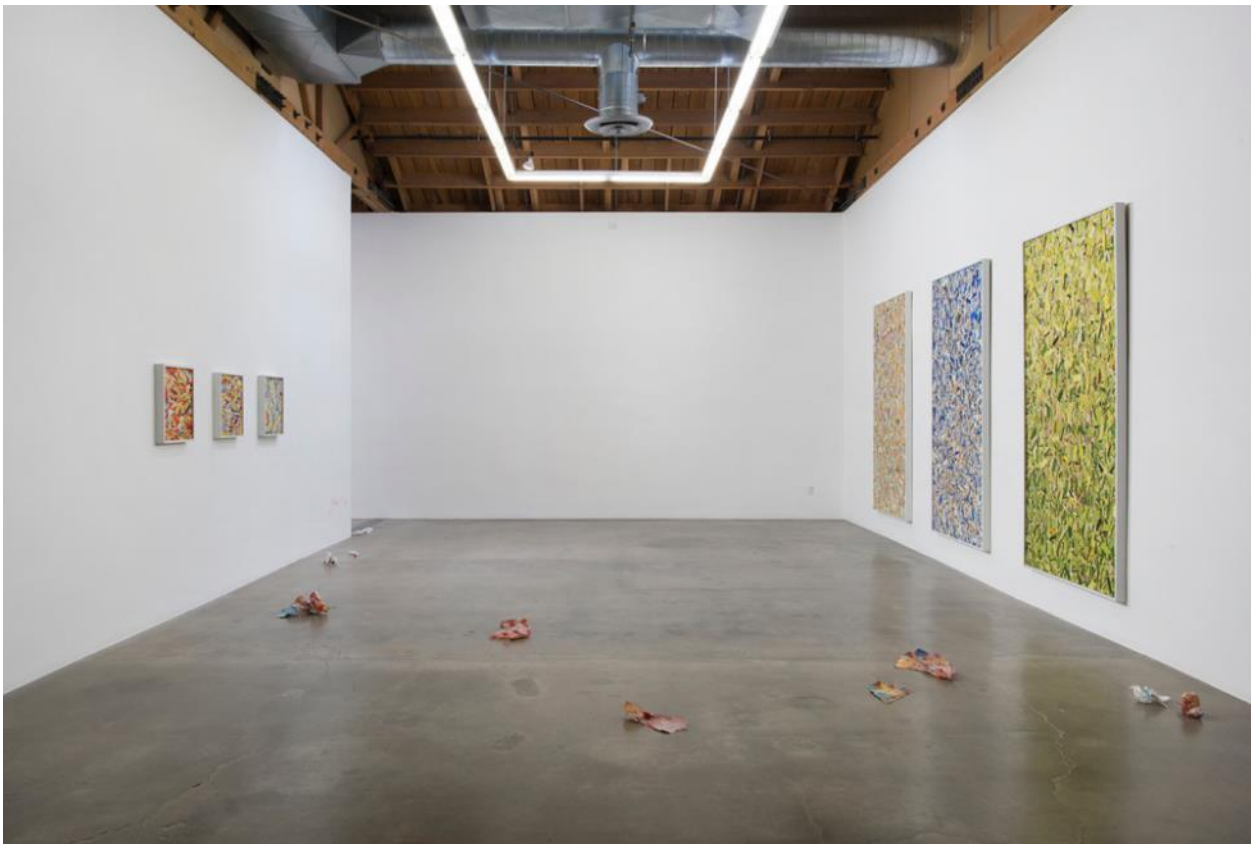
Zellen, Jody. "Kim Dingle, *YIPES*." *artandcakela.com (Art and Cake)*, 8 November 2017.

ART AND CAKE
A Contemporary Art Magazine with a Focus on the Los Angeles Art Scene

Kim Dingle "The Afterthought," Installation View. Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Photo credit: Robert Wedemeyer.

Kim Dingle's first installation at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects takes command of the entire gallery. YIPES fills four discrete rooms with three bodies of interrelated new works. Dingle carefully crafts a trajectory from room to room where autonomous series of works are on display. She also purposely interrupts the otherwise logical flow of these artworks, hinting at what will be unveiled in the back gallery, by littering the floor with bits and pieces of detritus. In this way, relics of the creative and destructive forces at play in her work permeate the entire space, simultaneously foreshadowing a site specific installation located in the back gallery.

Viewers first encounter diptychs entitled *Crush*. Resembling discarded tarps, large mounds of glassine piled on the floor are actually beautifully colored and patterned, painted artworks in themselves. These crumpled mounds are part of a series of diptychs in which Dingle juxtaposes them with painted photographs. The glassine works, positioned on the floor are assumed to be trash whereas the painted photographs have a pristine presence and sign as 'artworks.' Dingle created the photographs to use as templates and guides for repainting what was first depicted on the glassine. The crushed glassine mounds and the painted photographs work in concert with each other as pieces of a complex but intricate puzzle that refuses to coalesce. Surprisingly, Dingle's beloved figures are absent from these works— although figures do appear in *Crush (blue hair)*, 2016, any implied narrative across the works are subsumed by bright patches of color and abstract gestural painting.



Kim Dingle "Home Depot Coloring Books," Installation View. Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Photo credit: Robert Wedemeyer

The idea of tracing or filling in a given area with color is further explored in a series of paintings from 2017 entitled, *Home Depot Coloring Book*. To create these pieces, Dingle colors the irregular patterns found within standard size pieces of OSB (oriented strand board, but often referred to as particle board) available at Home Depot or any other lumber shop. The three large works: *Home Depot Coloring Book (flowers)*, *Home Depot Coloring Book (rain)* and *Home Depot Coloring Book (leaves)*, slyly reference nature. Dingle's palette is not arbitrary as the tones of blues and browns in *Home Depot Coloring Book (rain)*, for example suggest a rain filled forest whereas *Home Depot Coloring Book (leaves)* references fluttering yellow and green leaves amongst treetops. Three smaller works created from sections of the OSB entitled *Home Depot Coloring Book (anyone can do this)* allude to the notion of a readymade. While the title suggests that anyone could create these works, the specificities of Dingle's process and vision make them uniquely hers.

Dingle is not usually thought of as an artist with tricks up her sleeve. While she has received accolades for her facility as a painter, she is shy about her talents and tends to hide behind a facade of innocence. For many years, Dingle has created paintings filled with little girls of all shapes, sizes and colors frolicking and tumbling across her compositions. She has been painting these anonymous toddlers for so long that their execution is somewhat automatic. Simultaneously challenging and acknowledging this idea, Dingle decided to create a series of blindfolded images where she literally paints these figures without looking. A short video documents her at work, dipping her brush in paint and then moving to a large piece of plexiglas propped against the wall. The results, *Painting Blindfolded*, hang in the third gallery space. These black, white and gray oil on plexiglas paintings feature Dingle's idiosyncratic characters, alone or with others against a modulated background. Each figure is painted as black gestural outlines augmented by white

strokes for details and fill— dress, shoes, etc. These quirky, cartoon-like paintings with deliberate titles illustrate the range of Dingle's tongue and cheek relationship to her invented figures, as well as to the idea of painting blind.

Kim Dingle "Crush," Installation View. Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Photo credit: Robert Wedemeyer.

Located in the back gallery space is *The Afterthought*, 1994 and 2017. Here viewers encounter Priss. Priss is an expected presence—a doll-child who has inhabited Dingle's work since the mid 1990s. Priss is an angry, cunning, seductive toddler prone to destruction—self aware, yet shy. These figures often appear as wild-haired dolls wearing frilly white dresses and black school girl shoes. In *The Afterthought*, two Prisses have created havoc— one stomps upon a canvas laying flat on the floor and the other is entangled with one of Dingle's painted, crumpled glassine forms. Torn bits of ephemera are scattered across the floor and random lines, shapes and words mark the walls and bottom of a painting at doll-height. These Prisses have clenched fists and wear black sneakers and hoodies, contrasting with their frilly white panties. And, as they have scribbled on the wall, they are "pissed." Pissed at what one might ask? In *The Afterthought*, Dingle expresses her feelings about the state of the world. She even includes a yellow stained photograph of Donald Trump amongst the clutter. The random pieces of strewn detritus in the previous rooms lead to this denouement— and though entitled *The Afterthought*, the sentiment expressed here is implicit in the rest of the work and functions as a before, rather than an after-thought.

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Kim Dingle “Painting Blindfolded,” Installation View. Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Photo credit: Robert Wedemeyer.

Kim Dingle “The Afterthought,” Installation Views. Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Photo credit: Robert Wedemeyer

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Kim Dingle “Home Depot Coloring Books,” Installation View. Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Photo credit: Robert Wedemeyer

Kim Dingle “Home Depot Coloring Books,” Installation View. Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Photo credit: Robert Wedemeyer

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Kim Dingle “Crush and Uncrushed,” Installation View. Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Photo credit: Robert Wedemeyer

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Pagel, David. “Kim Dingle lets her alter ego loose, and the result is a rip-roaring ride.” *www.latimes.com (Los Angeles Times)*, 28 October 2017.

Los Angeles Times

An installation view of Kim Dingle’s “Yipes,” at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects (Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects)

If you’ve ever felt that your job was so boring you could do it with your eyes closed, you’ll know what Kim Dingle was thinking when she set out to make the 11 paintings filling one gallery of “Yipes,” her knockout exhibition in Culver City at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects.

Each of the 4-foot-by-3½-foot oils on Plexiglas depicts Priss, a little girl Dingle invented 30 years ago as an artistic alter ego. Dressed in her Sunday best, Priss goes through the motions of growing up. Sometimes she misbehaves magnificently. At other times she conveys the stoicism of someone who knows a thing or two about pretenders, the lies they live and the hypocrisy of it all.

The whiplash gestures with which Dingle has painted her pintsize doppelganger is true to the unselfconsciousness of kids, particularly when their imaginations transform the littlest of things into wildly delightful experiences.

Dingle brings such surprises to visitors in a 99-second video that shows her making one of the paintings with her eyes blindfolded. That’s how she made all 11, each in only two or three minutes. Not one is a dud. Carelessness and confidence collide and collude.

Kim Dingle's "Painting Blindfolded" series, which is part of her "Yipes" exhibition (Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects)

If you went to work blindfolded, your day would probably end badly. But art isn't like most jobs. And Dingle pulls it off with aplomb. Turning a 30-year-old story line into an adventure, she makes every brushstroke fresh, unfussy and fun.

That fearlessness spills even more freely from the other three galleries. Each is a show unto itself.

Detail of Kim Dingle's diptych "Crush (blue hair)," 2016, oil on C-print, 65 by 49 inches. (Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects)

Detail of Kim Dingle's "Crush (thanksgiving)," 2016, oil on C-print, 65 by 49 inches. (Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects)

The first — and the biggest — features seven diptychs. Each consists of a framed painting that hangs on the wall and a huge sheet of glassine that has been crumpled into a wad and tossed on the floor.

The wadded sheets function like Dingle's video: Each reveals the process she followed to make the painting next to it. First, she mounted a sheet of glassine on her studio wall and made a painting on it. Then she photographed that painting and printed it on a 5-foot-by-4-foot sheet of paper. That photograph became the underpainting for a finished work. In each simmers an intoxicating stew of past and present, photography and painting. Mistakes lead to discoveries.

The second gallery includes six oil paintings Dingle made by treating cheap sheets of particleboard as industrial strength paint-by-number sets. Filling in each irregular shape with a single color, she mocks the preciousness of much art while making paintings that let her smuggle aesthetic decisions — compositional and coloristic — into an approach that seems inhospitable to such subtlety.

Kim Dingle's "The Afterthought," 1994 and 2017, porcelain, steel wool, China paint, fabric, debris, glassine, linen and wood, dimensions variable. Part of the "Yipes" exhibition. (Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects)

In the fourth gallery, Priss and her sidekick take 3D form. Like knee-high hurricanes, each porcelain doll — with steel-wool hair —appears to be in the middle of a temper tantrum, her destructive energy vented on trashed paintings, ripped drawings and spray painted walls.

Dingle's four-gallery extravaganza is only her third solo show in Los Angeles in the last 20 years. She seems to be making up for lost time, pushing herself — and visitors — beyond what we have seen before.

That has always been Dingle's strong suit. In "Yipes," she doubles down. And plays it beautifully.

Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, 6006 Washington Blvd., Culver City. Through Nov. 11; closed Sundays and Mondays. (310) 837-2117, www.vielmetter.com

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Kim Dingle's "The Afterthought," 1994 and 2017, details, porcelain, steel wool, China paint, fabric, debris, glassine, linen and wood, dimensions variable. Part of the "Yipes" exhibition. (Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects)

Goldstein, Andrew M. “5 Artists to Discover at EXPO Chicago 2016.” *www.artspace.com (Artspace)*, 23 September 2016.

Artspace

When the German dealer Susanne Vielmetter first moved out to L.A. around the turn of the century, one of the most interesting artists she encountered there was Kim Dingle, a figurative painter who specialized in portraits of “little girls doing unspeakable things,” the gallerist recalls. At the time the artist had been working with Blum & Poe, but Dingle decided to drop out of the art world, put her paints aside, and open a vegetarian restaurant called Fatty’s—which became very successful.

Ten years passed, and then a little while ago Dingle showed up at Vielmetter’s gallery to announce that she had sold the restaurant, returned to the studio, and had new work to show. “I came the next day,” says Vielmetter, who was happy with what she saw. “As a figurative painter I think she ranks among the best and most interesting right now.”

As a sign of the times, those new paintings have taken a brutal turn—they’re at once more abstract and more clearly violent, even political, showing little black girls defaced or wielding handguns, occasionally shooting each other dead. Vielmetter has experience with reintroducing painters to the market (one success story was Nicole Eisenman, whom she took on in 2005 when she had “no career”) and now she is putting her weight behind Dingle’s resurgence.

In March, she gave half her Armory Show booth to the artist and sold 14 paintings, and now she’s bringing her work to Art Basel Miami Beach, with a major solo show planned at the gallery next fall. In an effort to grease the wheels, Vielmetter is keeping Dingle’s prices the same as before she pulled her disappearing act, adjusted for inflation.

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Miranda, Carolina. “Crazy babies and pantyhose: 5 must-see works at OCMA’s ‘Avant-Garde’.”
www.latimes.com (Los Angeles Times), 10 September 2014.

Los Angeles Times

A new show at the Orange County Museum of Art looks at work that pushed boundaries. Kim Dingle’s “Priss Room,” an installation from 1984, is one of the stand-outs. (Carolina A. Miranda)

Avant-garde is one of those terms with a short shelf-life. It refers to the new. But the new can only be new for so long. As curator Dan Cameron writes in the catalogue of the latest exhibition at the Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA): “Taken at its most literal, the ‘avant-garde’ is a phenomenon that occurs ... relative to a specific historical moment of quite limited duration, in which the art or artist referred to was leading the charge, in the front ranks — it is a military expression, after all — of the latest reliably disruptive manifestation of the new.”

“The Avant-Garde Collection,” a show that opened at OCMA this past weekend, examines the museum’s permanent collection from the lens of what was considered cutting edge at the time it was made.

“The avant-garde is not a movement, it’s not a style,” Cameron says. “But it’s very alive, and it’s been fascinating to look at the collection in this way.”

It certainly makes for an engrossing exhibition: a compilation of art-world rock stars and one-hit wonders, venerable statesman and young whippersnappers. It is a reminder that what may reside on the forefront today may lay practically forgotten tomorrow. But it can then re-emerge to surprise and inspire.

The exhibition kicks off with a 1924-1925 painting of flowers by the influential Stanton Macdonald-Wright, a key figure who supported the tenets of Cubism, an abstraction in Los Angeles in the 1930s and ‘40s. It ends with a tongue-in-cheek installation by the New York-based William Powhida, whose 2013 installation

"A Post Minimalism" manages to skewer both minimalism and the art market while commenting on economic inequity.

Who of these will be remembered in 100 years? Who knows?

The show offers plenty to look at: geometric abstraction, feminist video, light and space, assemblage, minimalism, photography and queer politics. Not to mention an insane 5,000-piece toy battle scene by Chris Burden that should fill any 8-year-old with awe and envy.

With so much to take in, we winnow it down to the essentials. Here are five pieces that are not to be missed:

BEST IN SHOW: Kim Dingle's psycho toddlers

Sometimes you walk into a show and wonder where a work of art has been your whole life. That's how I felt upon seeing Dingle's 1984 installation "Priss Room," which shows two crazypants-looking toddlers standing defiantly in a crib. The room around them has been trashed: crayon scrawl covers the cute sheep wallpaper, Skoal tobacco tins lay around the floor, along with diapers and empty cans of tuna. The faces on these wild girls are determined and maniacal. If you've been around little girls, you know this scene holds a lot of truth.

Dingle was born and raised and continues to live in the L.A. area. For a while she owned and ran the Eagle Rock restaurant Fatty's, which has since closed, allowing her to return to her art. (Dingle's first solo show in six years was last December at Coagula Curatorial.) Her early work was part of a profound exploration into the darker recesses of the psyche during the '80s and '90s, a firm step away from traditions like minimalism, which are all about shape and form. Her character Priss, she once told the Brooklyn Museum, "is like Shirley Temple as a psycho pit bull."

Cameron says this was in keeping with the era. "There was this idea of psychological self-portraiture, of showing oneself as an evil child with these demonic characters," he explains. "That's our toddler side. So the idea of the evil twins in the crib just waiting for the next chance to cause more mayhem, that's a self-portrait — an artist looking at themselves the way society might see them."

I have no doubt that the articles that cover this exhibition will spend a good deal of time documenting Chris Burden's room-sized toy battle scenario. It is macho, it is mammoth and it is obsessively fun to look at. (The seashell ships are a nice touch.) But in my mind, the raw energy of Dingle's piece is what steals the show.

Don't even think of missing it.

"The Avant-Garde Collection" is on view through Jan. 4 at the Orange County Museum of Art, 850 San Clemente Drive, Newport Beach, ocma.net.

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Vankin, Deborah. “Kim Dingle debuts ‘Wine Bar for Children’ at Coagula Curatorial.” *www.latimes.com (Los Angeles Times)*, 27 October 2013.

Los Angeles Times

The opening of “Kim Dingle’s Wine Bar for Children at Mister Ling’s Market” at Coagula Curatorial. (Deborah Vankin/Los Angeles Times)

Culture Monster popped into the opening of Kim Dingle’s show at Coagula Curatorial’s new gallery space in Chinatown on Saturday night. The installation -- “Kim Dingle’s Wine Bar for Children at Mister Ling’s Market,” was Dingle’s first solo installation in Los Angeles in almost 16 years.

The installation, which took over the entire gallery, was an ode of sorts to Dingle's years in the restaurant business. She and her partner, Aude Charles, recently closed their Eagle Rock restaurant, Fatty's; for the Coagula show, they turned Mat Gleason's gallery into a real boutique wine and craft beer shop, where paintings and 36 hand-painted bottles of Verdicchio were for sale, among other libations.

The bar itself was made from babies' crib parts, and Dingle displayed a 40-panel work from her "Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty's" series depicting fairy-like children perched atop bar stools. When it's not being hung, Dingle says, she stores the unframed painted sheets in a pizza box.

"This opportunity just came up; Mat's a real artist's gallerist," Dingle said of the new show, especially exhilarated. "It was like, 'Hey, everyone, let's put on a show!'"

The installation was particularly location-centric. It brought Ling's Market, which has been closed for years, back to life in a very concrete and practical way. The store's original 1940s cash register was being used, and after the Dingle show comes down, the gallery space – still owned by Ling's son, Jimmie Joe, who has a license to sell wine -- will continue to operate a wine shop in the back.

Gleason moved to the new space -- just across Chung King Road from his old gallery of the same name -- in mid-September. Rage Against the Machine's Zack de la Rocha, Gleason says, owns the building he was previously in and decided to open a recording space there, which prompted the move. DJ Skrillex (a.k.a. Sonny John Moore) also has a work space a few doors down -- all of which could speak to a changing face of the once uber-hip art hub.

"It worked out," Gleason said, "it's pretty cool. It's like I'm managing Ling's Market and running a gallery here too."

Gleason's first show in the new space, paintings by L.A.-based Mark Dutcher, received especially positive reviews and sold out but for one remaining work.

Even after her show comes down, Dingle -- who had numerous shows at L.A.'s Blum & Poe in the 1990s and is currently represented by Sperone Westwater gallery in New York -- will continue to curate the wine shop in the back of Gleason's gallery.

"That's why it's called 'Kim Dingle's Wine Bar for Children at Mister Ling's Market!'" she said, laughing.

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Cembalest, Robin. “Having her cake and eating it too?” *www.letmypeopleshow.com (Let My People Show)*, 12 April 2012.

LET MY PEOPLE SHOW

Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York

Having her cake and eating it too?

Untitled (Birthday), 2007, from Kim Dingle’s show of slightly demented and possibly drunken children’s birthday parties. The image dissolves, just like the frosting does, as one assertive and naughty-looking brushstroke detaches itself from the existentially challenged celebrant and drifts into the ocher ground.

In another daring gesture, the press release explains nothing–but it least this time it’s the artist’s choice.

It was ostensibly hijacked by Dingle, who, pronouncing that she has erased the bio the gallery wrote for her, issues a coy disclaimer. “Subjects are useful for paint and for using line,” she writes. “If what is depicted makes the artist laugh then all the more fun for the artist and maybe for the viewer, too – but it is usually an accident. That is all it is.”

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McLean, Madeline. “Dollies of Folly & Frolic: Kim Dingle at Sperone Westwater.”
www.dailyserving.com (Daily Serving), 11 April 2012.

Kim Dingle, *This is not ever going to end is it* (2011), oil on linen, 72 x 84 inches (183 x 213,4 cm), All images courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York

Kim Dingle’s exhibition entitled *still lives* at Sperone Westwater portrays a series of calamities played out by children sitting at tables, whirling off of chairs and clinking wine glasses in roistering merriment. Clown-like in depiction with disproportionally large feet and nondescript faces, the toddlers she presents are more so dolls than human children. Dingle’s newest works are less crowded than older works and by virtue of this developed space on the canvas, her concepts are more resolved. Instead of Dingle’s typical palette of blue, sepia and grey, these compositions are rendered in a sugar sweet mélange of pastel yellows, ochres,

Kim Dingle, *What do you think?* (2012), oil on linen, 84 x 72 inches (213,4 x 183 cm)

Kim Dingle, *Untitled (Birthday)* (2007), oil on canvas, 60 x 48 inches (152,4 x 121,9 cm)

greens and blues in a fanciful layering of both thin washes and sweeping, buttery strokes of oil paint à la Wayne Thiebaud.

Dingle's naughty dollies sit at long kitchen tables, subjects who emerge from her prototypical characters named "Fatty" and "Fudge", or "Priss Girls", whom she has depicted in earlier works, both in paintings and sculpture. Each child dons a pristine frock yet they are pictured drinking beverages out of wine glasses (some unidentified liquids, and some explicitly merlot-toned), toting bottles and kitchen utensils, draping themselves over (or through) chairs unabashedly displaying their child knickers, while some even lie forlornly passed out in their porridge. One cannot help but giggle at the site of such absurdity, yet the works emit an undertone of poignancy, the kind of disappointed sadness that I imagine would be provoked by a coming-of-age wrongdoing by your child, for instance stealing or drinking. This is precisely the crux in which Dingle puts her audience: straddling the emotional line of child/adult transformation and the sometimes seemingly absurd fluidity of progression and regression in relation to childhood and adulthood.

Dingle's doll characters comment on the state of mindless behavior that human beings, perhaps (this being the operative word in this case, depending on your view of nature vs. nurture) learn as we grow into adulthood. Dingle's characters are girls and this is comprehended by virtue of deliberate gender specific cues. Having been categorized as a feminist artist, her work is also taken as a survey of female childhood (see bio in Brooklyn Museum) and the representation of violence in relation to frivolity and the legacies thereof. In the negative space where the lack of politesse is depicted, Dingle's works provoke the question of being raised within societal bounds and the weight it carries in social situations as a projection of self and discipline.

With the exception of *Untitled (Birthday) (2007)* in which a figure wearing a party hat drowns her face in a cake of comparable proportion to herself, the compositions are devoid of any sort of food things despite the table settings filled with bowls and plates. With the symbolic dominance of food deleted from these works, which is dissimilar to Dingle's past works which feature food stuffs, the characters seem to act out a pantomime of consumption (minus the moments of splashing wine glasses). In several works, likewise with her older paintings, she pictures many of her dollies wearing chef hats, which further solidify the palpable sentiment of frivolity and clamor because they underline the notion of utter incompetency.

Dingle's *still lives* aims to make her audience laugh (refer to press release) and that it does. Her paintings conjure the childhood wonder of what your dolls (or stuffed animals) do when you are gone. It also astutely reflects those certain moments within adulthood where we may all act like naughty little children (I know

that a snap shot taken at one of my dinner parties wouldn't be a dissimilar image), which makes her works successful in pinpointing a grain of psychology that is as omnipresent as it is suppressed.

Kim Dingle, *Still life (2012)*, oil on linen, 84 x 144 inches (213,4 x 365,8 cm)

Kim Dingle's still lives will run through April 28th at Sperone Westwater in the Lower East Side.

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Pagel, David. "Dingle's return is delicious." *Los Angeles Times*, 23 November 2007, p. E30.

AROUND THE GALLERIES

Dingle's return is delicious

By DAVID PAGEL
Special to The Times

In the 1990s, **Kim Dingle** made a name for herself as one of L.A.'s best painters. She bought a big raw studio space in Eagle Rock, where she could paint and restore her British sports cars. But things didn't go as planned.

One morning, Dingle's desire for a cup of strong hot coffee got the best of her. With nowhere to get one in the neighborhood, she opened and ran Fatty's. The vegetarian wine bar consumed every waking minute of her life, leaving no time to work on cars, much less make paintings. The loudest voices in the art world greeted these developments with I-told-you-so-sanctimony, wagging their fingers at Dingle for trying to do more than was humanly possible.

At Kim Light/Lightbox, Dingle's first solo show in Los Angeles in 10 years demonstrates that if you're sufficiently talented, you can eat your cake and have it too. "The Cake Series" reveals an artist at the top of her game. Its 11 deliciously sophisticated — and disarmingly simple — oils on linen suggest that Dingle's hiatus from painting not only did not diminish her art, but sharpened its focus and amplified its resonance.

In the larger of two galleries, nine mid-size paintings (all 5 feet by 4 feet) depict anonymous little girls abandoning their manners, their civility, their very selves to the all-or-nothing intensity of pure, animal satisfactions. Some dive headfirst into cakes that are just about as big as they are. Others bury their faces in thick gobs of frosting. One nuzzles up to a big gray cake — like an exhausted lover or hibernating bear cub. And another collapses, like a drunk in the street. In every juicy painting, pleasure takes the upper hand and food gets the best of the girls.

There's something feral in Dingle's daintily dressed lasses, whose sweetness, vulnerability and innocence are all the more real for existing alongside ferocity, wildness and forget-the-consequences decisiveness.

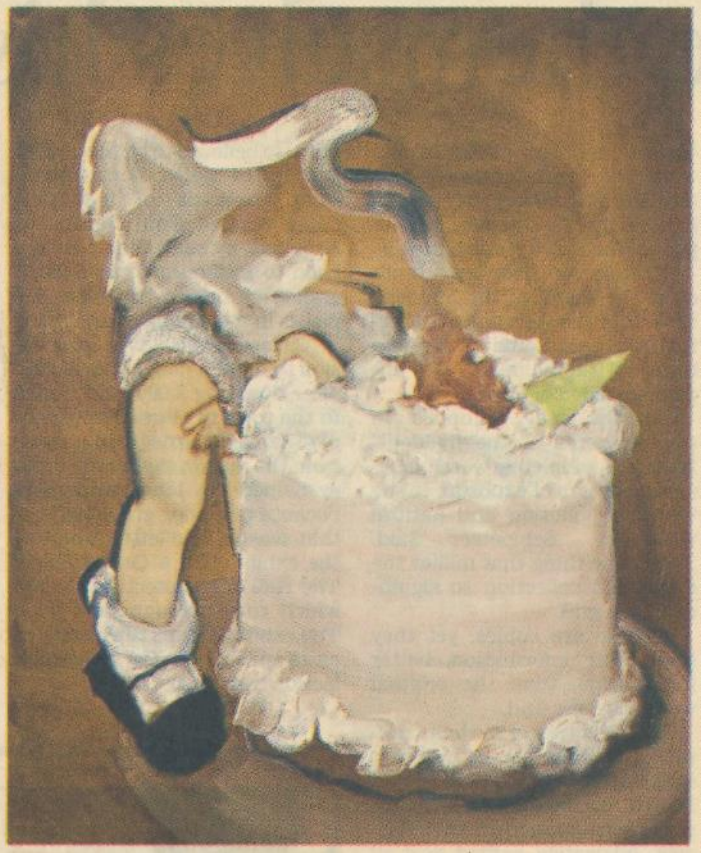
The same goes for the way Dingle paints.

Some of her pictures are better than others. Although all are dated 2007, it isn't difficult to guess the rough sequence in which they were finished. The early ones look a little stiffer, more carefully composed and properly realized. They suggest an old pro working off the rust and getting back into the groove. The most recent are the loosest, the blurriest, the most furiously rendered. In them, painterly abandon and pictorial coherence play tug of war. Dingle handles the violent to-and-fro with graceful élan, juicing up the drama with casual confidence.

Two of the boldest paintings occupy the smaller gallery. A diptych shows the aftermath of a birthday party, and a single-panel painting depicts a figure standing alone, her shoulders slumped and head bent in the posture of a penitent from a medieval or Renaissance religious painting. Chocolate is all over the place, dripping excrementally. Empathy is the predominant sentiment.

Dingle's mundane subjects allow her to address big issues without getting heavy-handed. Philip Guston did something similar with his cartoonish paintings of hooded figures. If Charles Schulz and Willem de Kooning had collaborated, their works might resemble Dingle's. But if they ran a restaurant, it wouldn't be anything like Fatty's.

Kim Light/Lightbox, 2656 S. La Cienega Blvd., (310) 559-1111, through Dec. 8. Closed Sundays and Mondays.
www.kimlightgallery.com



ED GLENDINNING *Kim Light/Lightbox*

DIGGING IN: *Civility and manner is set aside by the subjects in Kim Dingle's "The Cake Series" at Kim Light/Lightbox.*

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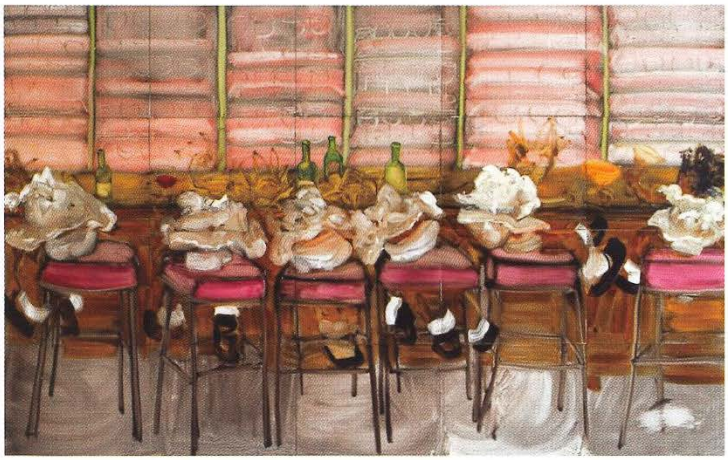
Kreimer, Julian. "Kim Dingle at Sperone Westwater." *Art in America*, June/July 2007, p. 196.



Kim Dingle: *Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty's (Wine Bar for Children I)*, 2007, oil on vellum, 76 by 120 inches; at Sperone Westwater.

NEW YORK

Kim Dingle at Sperone Westwater

Monet had Giverny; Kim Dingle has Fatty's. Having made a name for herself in the 1990s as a "bad-girl" artist messily showing the dark side of little girls, Dingle took a break from exhibiting to start and run Fatty's, a vegetarian restaurant and wine bar in her studio in L.A. Her work in the '90s may have fit a bit too comfortably into the miscreant tone of much art of the decade, but this show, in which the restaurant provides the main theme, is a strong and welcome return for the artist, who hasn't had a solo exhibition in the U.S. since 2000 (she had one in Milan in 2002).

Each of the 17 recent paintings (all 2006 or '07) use her stock characters of Fudge and Fatty, little curly-haired black and white girls wreaking havoc on different areas of a restaurant. Made on grids of vellum sheets taped together on the wall, the paintings take advantage of the slickness of the material: the paint is partly wiped off, leaving a smooth but agitated surface that is then punctuated by thick dollops of impasto—particularly apt in describing the foods that serve as props in the pictures.

The show took us through the different worlds of the restaurant, from the customers and waiters in the front room, back through the cooking and dishwashing in the kitchen, to the final scenario, arguably the essence of any restaurant: a set of plastic bins overflowing with wet garbage. The little girls rush by, some in chef's toques, carrying pink martinis on trays, while their customers fall off their chairs, force Riesling down each others' throats and generally trash the place. The funniest painting—*Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty's (Wine Bar for Children I)*—shows the kids, plastered from red wine, slumping in their frilly dresses and Mary Janes on fancy bar stools in a sleek gray and purple setting (particularly fitting since Sperone Westwater is located in the middle of the meatpacking district, with its trendy nightclubs).

The paintings tackle a host of issues: infantile id, racism and general misbehavior, as well as the intertwined worlds of consumption, production and clean-up in the food service industry. Dingle wasn't included in "Global Feminisms," the big exhibition showing simultaneously at the Brooklyn Museum [through July 11], and the omission of artists like Dingle is telling. Where in the Brooklyn show the art often seems like illustration for the discussion in wall texts, Dingle trusts the viewer's ability to discern themes, as well as tie them together. She uses humor and painterly verve to carry us through a maelstrom of ideas without preachiness; we leave feeling we've been shown a part of life, not been told about it.

—Julian Kreimer

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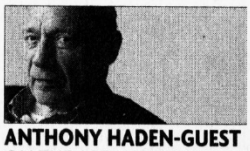
Haden-Guest, Anthony. "Something personal this way comes." *Financial Times*, 21 April 2007, p. W15.

Something personal this way comes



ANTHONY HADEN-GUEST
ON THE ART WORLD

A sink full of washing-up features in one of Kim Dingle's powerful paintings, currently on show at Sperone Westwater, a gallery on Manhattan's East 13th Street. Beneath it is a canvas of three bins overflowing ripely with kitchen rubbish. In another, a pan flames on a stove. Elsewhere two frenetic females in chef's toques are portrayed throwing themselves among giant cakes. "Just look at that fondue," approves Dingle's gallerist, Angela Westwater.

The show comes with a story. Five years ago, after her last show, Dingle opened up part of her Los Angeles studio as a coffee bar, where she and a female partner, Aude, started dishing up soups, salads, and wine. Fatty's, as Dingle called her *boîte*, was soon such a hit that it devoured the artist's time. But it now feeds back into her work.

Deep personal experience has been drawn on by artists (some artists anyway), from the beginnings of art-making. In Modernism, Van Gogh's self-portrait with a bandaged ear is blunt, Francis Bacon's canvases dealing with the suicide of his partner George Dyer are more coded. The Düsseldorf master Josef Beuys, who crashed on the Crimean Front as a radio operator with the Luftwaffe, and who owed his life to Tartars, who swaddled him in animal fat and felt, used these as art materials throughout his career.

But personal experience is now flooding into art-making as never before. It's not hard to find compelling reasons why. There is the huge influence of Performance on studio-made fine arts, for one (Beuys was a performance artist also). There has been the impact of photography and video, both often conduits for the fiercely personal. There is the confessional culture (hello, Tracey Emin), the over-arching internet, the insistent familiarities of e-mail, and now the ungovernable tsunami of blogs. Artists are part of the real world too. How could their practices not be affected?

Take, for instance, the show of MP Landis at 55 Mercer, a gallery run by artists as a co-op and, as such, New York's oldest. The Landis show consists of 14 pieces, respectively on wood and paper. Each is called "Another". Each is an oblong into which a small hole has been cut into the bottom right section. Each hole has been plugged with something not particularly well-fitting, which is sometimes stitched into place.

The subject is Landis's recent kidney transplant.

Actually, Landis's health is the dominant subject of all his art. "I developed

'This work is my way of dealing with having someone else's kidney in my body'

Type One diabetes when I was six," he tells me, his manner mild, without self-pity. "I was in a coma for about two days. And when I came out of this coma the first thing I said to my mother was 'when I grow up I'm either going to be a doctor or be an artist'. I had forgotten that. She reminded me, years later. The doctor made sense but I didn't actually have any role model for an artist at that age."

Landis is now 42. His transplant followed a bout of pneumonia. The donor was a close friend, a musician. "This work is my way of dealing with the idea of actually having someone else's kidney in my body," he says.

The "Another" pieces can be read as meditative abstractions. "But watching people at the opening, it seemed like it was quite disturbing to some people. They sort of fled."

Will the series continue?

"I thought I might do more. But now I think I've done whatever I needed to do," he said.

I reached Kim Dingle at Fatty's, which, it transpires, is Zagat-rated.

"Everything that I do here gets into the painting," she says. "On June 1, we will have completed our sixth year. I'm here right now. I overslept. I had an appointment to meet the ice-man. He's moving our ice machine to a new location. We're expanding the kitchen.

"I'll be here all day. Then I'm planting the herb garden. On Sunday night they were already snipping my brand-new basil plants that weren't even in the ground yet. Because we needed really fresh basil to garnish the moussaka."

How does she distinguish the cooking process from the art-making?

"It's an identical process. You pick your materials. You know, I like to use Windsor & Newton oils. And when we pick oil for the kitchen we pick pumpkin seed oil. Which is sometimes really hard to find. And really high quality hand-made olive oil from Italy.

"So I don't even know when I can make paintings. Because it sucks the lifeblood out of me. Twenty-four hours a day! Running a restaurant is the hardest job I have ever done in my life. I can paint a masterpiece easier than I can run a restaurant."

Dingle's art helped her deal with the life.

"I used to throw chairs and sometimes I was very rude because I was exhausted all the time. But you can't do that in hospitality. And a lot of the frustrations I could take out in this work.

"There's an awful lot of fondue and cheese on these girls' socks. And spilled drinks and broken glasses when the cakes don't go right. I can't do it in the restaurant but I do it in the paintings."

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"Kim Dingle." *The New Yorker*, 16 April 2007, p. 24.

KIM DINGLE

Celebrated for bravura renderings of little girls in frilly dresses and violent moods, the Los Angeles artist Dingle stopped painting for a number of years while a modest coffeehouse that she founded, called Fatty's, became an exhaustingly successful restaurant. Now she's back with "Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty's," muralish oils on gridded sheets of vellum, in which terrible tykes eat, drink, whip up enormous pastries, and generally gourmandise their wicked little brains out. Dingle's Soutine-like panache is wilder and catchier than ever—in, as well as about, excellent taste. Through April 28. (Sperone Westwater, 415 W. 13th St. 212-999-7337.)

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"Kim Dingle." *Time Out New York*, 12-18 April 2007, p. 93.

Sperone Westwater

415 W 13th St between Ninth Ave and Washington St (212-999-7337). Tue–Sat 10am–6pm.

Kim Dingle, "Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty's Cafe." In 2000, Dingle had turned part of her L.A. studio space into a vegetarian cafe. Recently, she took a hiatus from slinging veggie burgers to return to painting. On view are the fruits of her labors: a series of gestural paintings on vellum featuring frenzied, plate-wielding figures. Through Apr 28.

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Lowenstein, Kate. “Kim Dingle: Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty’s.” *L Magazine*, 11-24 April 2007, p. 64.

Kim Dingle: Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty's

Sperone Westwater, *through April 28*

Kim Dingle, a self-proclaimed "reluctant restaurateur," isn't making reference to Da Vinci's masterpiece in her latest series of oil paintings. The title, rather, points to her stint as owner of a California eatery called Fatty's: She's anticipating the day when she can end that frenetically paced career and return to her art. Her series of paintings on vellum depict chubby girls with wild curls, flinging food, swilling wine and tearing into each other while sitting at (and standing on) a long table (which, intentionally or not, does indeed make reference to the depiction of Jesus's final meal). These larger-than-life scenes are straight out of a storybook about naughty children; their irreverence is reflected in the saucily loose brushtrokes and haphazardly assembled panels (the vellum is in small squares that come together to form the images). Dingle's work infuses the gallery with a rare exuberance; it's hard to imagine she doesn't take some pleasure in rowdy visitors to her restaurant.

Kate Lowenstein

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Cohen, David. "KIM DINGLE: Studies For The Last Supper At Fatty's." *The New York Sun*, 5 April 2007, p. 20.

ART IN BRIEF

KIM DINGLE: Studies For The Last Supper At Fatty's

Sperone Westwater

Kim Dingle, in her latest body of paintings, represents the happy marriage of two opposing impulses of Californian culture: hedonism and abjection.

Ms. Dingle belongs to a Los Angeles School that explores the dark side of mass culture. She was included in an aptly titled survey, "Sunshine and Noir: Art in LA, 1960–97," that traveled around European museums in 1997. Her subject is little girls behaving badly. She has created two characters, infants with prematurely adult faces and borderline personality tastes, one black the other white, whom she has christened the "Priss Girls."

An early installation, "Priss" (1994), included at Sperone Westwater in a project room, presents the girls as porcelain dolls with steel wool hair, little white party dresses, and Mary Jane shoes with a litter of toys and detritus scattered around them. Preoccupations with mess and excess obsess various L.A. artists, including Edward Kienholz, Paul McCarthy, and Mike Kelley.

Ms. Dingle enjoyed early success but took an extended hiatus from art between 2000 and 2006 after a café she opened in her studio, Fatty's, did phenomenally well as a vegetarian soul food restaurant and later as a wine bar. (Curiously, Damien Hirst, also an abjectionist, was a successful restaurateur in London in the 1990s.) Ms. Dingle's return to painting, in a series titled "Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty's," fuses the Priss girls and their author's foray into the catering industry.

SPERONE WESTWATER

Kim Dingle, 'Last Supper at Fatty's (Dining Room)' (2006-07).

Ms. Dingle's oil squidges deliciously on her support, sheets of vellum whose smooth surface seems reluctant to hold the medium. Impasto, in Ms. Dingle's handling, has both culinary and scatological implications. The vellum panels are taped together rather haphazardly and fixed directly to the walls, unframed, making it hard to resist the suspicion that they might be recycled laminated menus after all.

David Cohen

Through April 28 (415 W. 13th St., between Greenwich and Washington streets, 212-999-7337).

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Jana, Reena. "Kim Dingle." *ARTnews*, May 2001, p. 195.

Kim Dingle

SPERONE WESTWATER

Using a palette that evokes both the sepia tones of daguerreotype photographs and the dark paintings of Zurbarán and Goya, Kim Dingle, in her "Never in School" series (2000) of oil paintings on vellum, creates a disturbing, fantastical vision of girlhood. The stars of these compositions are Dingle's recurring "Priss Girls," characters outfitted in Mary Jane shoes and fluffy white dresses. Belying their innocent attire, the children wreak havoc in classrooms and on playgrounds, engaging in violent and self-destructive acts à la *Lord of the Flies*.

In *Never in School (school grounds)*, a child lies face down on the floor, the figure outlined in red, hinting at blood; a large girl beats a smaller girl; another figure, rendered as a blur, appears to be running away. All are painted with a gestural flair reminiscent of de Kooning—an apt approach for conveying fear and frenzy.

The more abstract or expressionist the paintings, the more successful they are, since, given Dingle's subject matter, they assume a more nightmarish feel. *Never in School (dogfight)* has a faintly Rothko-like background. Here, washes of paint signify a fenced-in playground. Cartoonish figures are portrayed alongside dog silhouettes that have been created with quick brushstrokes. At first, the image seems playful, but close inspection reveals that the animals are attacking.

In *Never in School (barfing)*, a possible reference to bulimia, the figure is portrayed in a loose style; Dingle's brushstrokes are highly visible. Without the painting's graphic title, it would be hard to determine what was happening. The subject's vomit is represented by a simple dark line, but the poetic approach Dingle takes makes the image particularly haunting, like a bad memory obscured by time but not forgotten.

—Reena Jana

COURTESY PRIVATE COLLECTION/SPERONE WESTWATER, NY

Kim Dingle, *Never in School (dogfight)*, 2000, oil on vellum, 24" x 19". Sperone Westwater.

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Honigman, Ana. "Kim Dingle." *Frieze*, May 2001, pp. 100-101.

Kim Dingle

Sperone Westwood,
New York

The saccharine Mary Bells in Kim Dingle's show 'Never in School' resemble nasty little meringues. François Boucher painted women to look like elegant cake decorations, while Renoir's women resemble overgrown milk puddings who could satisfy the gamut of sexual and gastronomical needs. While fleshy, Renoir's female figures are not like those featured in Rubens' paintings, who, even when lounging on Mount Olympus, the latter look as if they could laugh, fart and screw like a pack of Hell's Angels. As rebuttal or retribution, feminist artists such as Janine Antoini, Hannah Wilke or Karen Finley have attacked this food metaphor with a punk rock giggle.

Dingle, whose characters look like evil pastries, also takes on insidious assumptions about acceptable female behaviour. Her work points to a downward trajectory in the maturation of girls: the characters that populate her paintings seem to be having a wild time being very, very bad. Like a pack of diminutive Kat Bjellands and pre-movie star Courtney Loves, Dingle's girls attack the sensual atrophy of adulthood where candy becomes more of a threat than a treat and antiquated notions of 'good girl/bad girl' still secretly prevail.

As in Ida Applebroog's work, the surfaces of Dingle's paintings appear slick and raw, and are created from an almost monochromatic palette of sickly-sweet colours: hot fudge, butterscotch, white chocolate and maple. Painted in the manner of a rejected child pushing left-over syrup around a paper plate, the paintings could be read as a little girl's hieroglyphic documentation of her exploits.

Earlier there was only one character in Dingle's oeuvre, Priss, who might have been dressed like Shirley Temple but was rougher and naughtier than Dennis the Menace because she could manipulate any adult with a coy twist of her little shoes. Later, Priss split like a gremlin into a pair named Fatty and Fudge. With a Hobbesian worldview, Dingle has Fudge, a little black girl, and Fatty, a little white girl, act either as cohorts or adversaries battling each other like members of the WWF or playground buddies in Valhalla. In *Never in School* (all works 2000) Fatty and Fudge have many little playmates but they are the ringleaders, in school classrooms and playgrounds without adults or boys.

Never in School (Two Girls, One Barfing) depicts Fudge forcing Fatty's head downward as Fatty vomits up a slick butterscotch-coloured mess. In *Never in School (Guess Who)* Fudge yanks Fatty backwards in a vicious wrestling move. Standing behind, with her arm locked over his eyes, Fudge pushes one of Fatty's pudgy arms behind her back. She bends his marshmallow body so far backwards that her skirt floats over her navel and a pair of white panties floats over Fatty's chocolate smeared legs and liquorice sandles.

Panties are a key part of the girls' prim dolly-pie costume, but there is nothing sexual or sexualized about them. Dingle, who is Californian, works in a country where Rousseau's ideas of the child as innocent blank slate are upheld with furious vigilante devotion. This myth explains why Sally Mann's art is lumped in the same category as the mawkish photos of somnambulistic pre-pubescent girls taken with hazy *Penthouse* lighting by camera-packing Humbert Humbert David Hamilton. For Dingle's girls, like Mann's, strength does not lie in the ability to get grown-ups or men to protect them, but in their ability to be strong for themselves.

In Dingle's world there is really no victim or motive, only restive *schadenfreude*. The girls bully each other because it is fun without a real sense of consequence. When children, such as eleven-year-old murderer Mary Bell, kill other children they do not comprehend the permanence of death. *Never in School* exists in the same child's world without real physical damage and there are no images of the aftermath of the malicious play. Fatty,

Kim Dingle
Never in School (Blackboard S.H.E.T.)
2000
Oil on vellum
61 × 48 cm

Kim Dingle, whose characters look like evil pastries, takes on insidious assumptions about acceptable female behaviour.

Fudge and the girls display a sociopathic absence of empathy, particularly when competing motives such as greed or fun are more pressing. For Dingle, as for Margaret Atwood, 'children are only children to adults; to each other they are life-size.'

Ana Honigman

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Lovelace, Carey. "Kim Dingle at Sperone Westwater." *Art in America*, March 2001, pp. 132-133.

Kim Dingle at Sperone Westwater

"Never in School," Kim Dingle's latest plunge into irascible little girlhood, is a series of small oil-on-vellum paintings in which elementary schoolers clad in pinafores and Mary Janes once again seem to have gone slightly over the edge. They roughhouse, pummel each other, vomit, moon the viewer, misspell dirty words on the blackboard, tussle with seething animals, clamber up fences and overturn chairs.

The works, executed in blurry beiges, sepias and browns on translucent vellum, nod in the direction of the old masters. Warm hues, combined with schoolroom settings and old-fashioned dress, give the sense of children's book illustrations à la Norman Rockwell. However, this warm and cuddly look belies the paintings' actual content, which features not only mayhem but even a twinge of pedophilia—luscious, juicy little thighs peeking out beneath bulging underpants. In one schoolyard scene, a little girl lifts her skirt while another, holding a toddler by the hand, seems to point out her friend's private parts. In another, a girl appears to wrestle with a rabid, rottweilerlike dog with an erection. However, the specifics are less than clear; Dingle's deft, swift strokes create a smeary sense of motion, in a technique that also brings to mind children's fingerpainting.

Often tagged as the quintessential "bad girl" artist, Dingle has spent the last 10 years exploring the relatively uncharted territory of the juvenile female id. An able craftsperson, she seems each time to want to deploy a slightly different approach. At her last Sperone Westwater outing two years ago, she created papier-mâché dolls that literally burst through Sheetrock walls in female rage; these were accompanied by paintings restaging historical scenes such as Iwo Jima, but populated with little female hell-raisers.

In this comparatively modest gathering displayed at the gallery's 121 Greene Street annex, the starring characters were Fatty, a tousled redhead, and Fudge, an African-American—two Shirley Temple look-alikes who have appeared elsewhere in the Dingle opus. Once again, they flail away, accompanied by madcap playmates, as well as some dogs and a bunch of very scary roosters. This West Coast-based artist's tomboy-tot aggression can be written off as feminist venting or as a deliberate attempt to shock. Yet the hair-pulling fistfights and the many episodes taking place outside adult supervision, while exaggerated satires, also have the specificity of lived memories. Beyond all that, the unprocessed rage captured in these works points to something larger—to society's own destructive, erotic energies that are always simmering just below the surface.

—*Carey Lovelace*

Kim Dingle: ***Never in School (Blackboard S.H.E.T.)***, **2000, oil on vellum, 24 by 19 inches; at Sperone Westwater.**

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Glueck, Grace. “Kim Dingle: ‘Never in School.’” *The New York Times*, 1 December 2000, p. E35.

Kim Dingle
'Never in School'

Sperone Westwater
121 Greene Street, SoHo
Through Dec. 22

Those two troublemakers, the Priss girls, are up to more subversive antics in Ms. Dingle's new show, this time using school as the venue for their play dates. The artist's deliberately highfalutin painting style, in sepia tones with white, gives frilly emphasis to the cartoony doings of these first-grade innocents, "Fatty" and "Fudge," one white, the other black.

In their dainty little dresses and Mary Jane shoes, the two fight, take off their clothes, climb chain-link fences, write dirty words on a blackboard, comfort each other and make messes in the classroom. In one work they are tearing each other's hair out; in another, they are in the middle of a dogfight; in a third, all that's visible is an abandoned classroom with clothes strewn on desks and floor, mute evidence of their status as role models for other children.

What brings it all off is Ms. Dingle's satirical use of a painting mode (on vellum, yet) usually reserved for high-art subjects. Velázquez, meet Fatty and Fudge.

GRACE GLUECK

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"Kim Dingle." *The New Yorker*, 27 November 2000, p. 32.

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

KIM DINGLE

If anyone really deserves to be called a bad-girl artist, it is Dingle, who paints rampaging tykes in frilly dresses and counsels younger artists to "take off all your clothes, put on a diaper, and regress." In the misbehavior department, Dingle's protagonists, a pair of enfants terribles named Fatty and Fudge, continue to lead by example: in recent monoprint-like paintings on vellum, the girls brawl, puke, moon, scrawl "SHET" on blackboards, and finally scale a schoolyard fence and light out for the territories. While some may find all this tomboyish mayhem a little too "empowering," the best pictures seem genuinely raucous, like a pint-size alternative to the W.W.F. Through Dec. 22. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St. 431-3685.)

D'Souza, Aruna. "Kim Dingle at Sperone Westwater." *Art in America*, March 1999, p. 110.

NEW YORK

Kim Dingle at Sperone Westwater

Kim Dingle takes stereotypes of femininity and turns them on their head. Her recent series of paintings (all 1998) features a group of young children, collectively named "Priss." In frilly dresses and Mary Janes, they embody sugar-and-spice girlishness, but they play with a measure of violence usually associated with snips-and-snails-and-puppy-dog-tails boys. In *Untitled (Girls with Dresspole)*, a group of rushing youngsters raise a flagpole, Iwo Jima-like, with a party dress flapping at the top. *Untitled (Hatchet)* depicts a tot swinging an ax at a tree (shades of George Washington) as her crinolines blow in the wind. The elegant, sensuous handling of these paintings, all executed in ultramarine and white, invites comparison with Fragonard, that Rococo painter of "feminine" delicacy; yet the translucent paint layers that melt into a fog-like haze and the brushstrokes that stick to the surface in an oily, lickable way—look at the girl's skirt in *Untitled (Hatchet)*—convey acts of aggression that are absolutely unsensual.

Dingle's topsy-turvy world continued in the second room of the gallery, where a pair of "Prisses," here called "Fatty" and "Fudge," were realized in sculptural form. Two porcelain dolls, dressed in silk and lace dresses with white petticoats and baby-doll shoes, burst out of opposite sides of a plaster-covered wall in the center of the room, steel-wool hair covered in white chalky dust, terrifying looks on their faces (the dark-skinned Fudge sticks out an impossibly pink tongue at the viewer, her fist clenched into a black power salute). A sort of Charles-Ray-meets-Bride-of-Chucky feeling prevails, and there is an uncanniness about these fragile porcelain figures, which are anything but vulnerable.

Two nagging problems undermine the work. The first is Dingle's rather naive "bad girl" feminism, which implies that all one needs to do is turn the stereotypes of femininity upside-down in order to make a subversive statement. Showing little girls doing "boyish" things may only reinforce the gender binarism that Dingle purports to attack. The second reservation concerns the instrumentalization of painting. Despite Dingle's technical ability, only in the best of these canvases is there a coincidence of medium, method and meaning. In *Untitled (Grapes)* for example, the gestural strokes slowly coalesce to reveal a cluster of putti who seem at once to hang grapelike from the top edge of the picture and to move skyward as if in flight. Here the convergence of sensuality and struggle, of sweetness and naughtiness, succeeds in pointing both to Dingle's artistic sources and to the social world of gender relations.

—*Aruna D'Souza*

Kim Dingle: *Untitled (Broom)*, 1998, oil on linen, 84 by 72 inches; at Sperone Westwater.

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Siegel, Katy. "Kim Dingle." *Artforum*, February 1999, p. 96.

KIM DINGLE

SPERONE WESTWATER

Not so long ago, angry women were all the rage, and, for Kruger, Holzer, et al., it was a clean burn. Kim Dingle belongs to that same generation, but in her case the emotions are messier and the work rejects any slickness. Not only is there nothing to read in the works, the messages are downright preverbal.

Dingle's exhibition included one sculptural installation and six large paintings covered with the figures of girls and horses and decorative motifs like ivy all painted in a beautiful ultramarine, with bits of raw canvas peeking through. Both the all-over pattern paintings and the monumental central compositions share the same fluffy brushwork and white impasto touches of the rococo. Other artists have resurrected academic, low, or just plain unfashionable art in order to challenge modernist values of intellectual, formal abstraction or purity, as if looking to prove that nothing is too déclassé to convert into avant-garde art. But Kim Dingle not only fearlessly follows Fragonard in making lovely paintings (although one or two wobble in their handling of the figure), she keeps a straight face while doing so.

If the rococo (with perhaps a touch of California baroque) sets the formal tone here, the emotional pitch is one of classic primitivism. But unlike Gauguin, Dingle finds her realness in kindergarten rather than the South Seas. In the best painting, *Untitled (Girls with Dresspole)*, 1998, she reenacts the Iwo Jima memorial, capturing a horde of little girls around a pole (with a fluttering white dress for a flag) in the act of claiming Lord knows what. As in the other paintings, the substance of the work deliberately sways in and out of sympathy with its style. Dingle's little girls frolic, but they also chop down trees and wrestle mustangs—activities associated more with the Wild West than the suburban backyard.

Even after tearing down idealized notions of childhood's innocence, we still

Kim Dingle, ***Untitled (Girls with Dresspole)***, **1998,** oil on linen, 84 x 72".

believe in its emotional authenticity—even now that the artist in our culture seems to have lost access to this quality. Dingle's faith in kid id is clearest in the sculptural installation, *Fatty and Fudge*, 1998. Two little girls, made from papier-mâché and oil paint and decked out in poofy velvet and satin dresses, disrupt the famous white cube of the gallery, bursting out from either side of a large freestanding wall, leaving it full of holes with piles of plaster on the floor. Their violent outburst suggests uncontrolled emotion as well as artistic and psychological breakthrough.

I like Fudge, but Fatty frightens me. Fudge, a small black girl, winningly thrusts her tongue out as if trying very hard. Fatty, with her large, sturdy limbs and adult expression (courtesy of John Wayne, according to the artist), is too big, a disturbing mix of child and adult. She reminds me of Judy Garland's overgrown yet still childish Dorothy, eyes wide and chest bound. *Fatty and Fudge* is more typical of what Dingle is known for: surreal installations of wild "Priss" dolls. The pretty paintings may disappoint those who look to Dingle for art that acts out; the artist may be taming her inner child to find a different audience, but she may just as well have felt like putting sugar before spice for a change.

—*Katy Siegel*

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Schwendener, Martha. "Kim Dingle, 'Fatty and Fudge.'" *Time Out New York*, 10-17 December 1998, p. 66.

Kim Dingle, "Fatty and Fudge"

Sperone Westwater, through Dec 19 (see Soho).

If you still think little girls are made of sugar and spice and everything nice, Kim Dingle will set you straight. Since the early '90s, her paintings have starred a baby-doll character named Priss. Part alter ego, part *Bride of Chucky,* Priss has served as Dingle's principal agent in laying to rest the myths regarding little girls and their passivity. More important, Priss has been the prism through which Dingle has examined the role of women within culture as a whole.

Kim Dingle, *Untitled (Hatchet),* 1998.

In Dingle's current exhibition, Priss has metamorphosed into two separate characters: a pair of eight-year-old girls named Fatty and Fudge. Although they're dressed alike in velvet and lace, Fatty is Caucasian, while Fudge is an African-American.

In a series of mostly blue canvases and several sculptural installations, Fatty and Fudge attempt to remake history. In *Untitled (Hatchet),* for instance, Fudge swings an ax into a tree (Washington's cherry tree?). In *Untitled (The Kid with Horse),* Fatty rides naked through the streets à la Lady Godiva. Then there's my favorite: a view of Fatty and Fudge and other little girls at Iwo Jima. Instead of the American flag, however, the image features the raising of a frilly dress flapping in the wind. In another gallery, Fatty and Fudge are rendered as two mannequins dressed in blue and covered in plaster; we see them "crashing" through a gallery wall.

All of these works are, in a sense, metaphors for Dingle herself, whose own preadolescentlike impudence acts as a battering ram to break down gender-imposed barriers. Like William Golding in *The Lord of the Flies,* Dingle focuses on the feral nature of childhood to remind us that "civilized" behavior is learned. Yet her real point is much sharper: If being good means keeping quiet and doing as one is told, then women have a lot to learn from bad little girls like Fatty and Fudge.

—Martha Schwendener

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF PAUL KASMIN GALLERY; COURTESY OF MICHAEL WERNER GALLERY; COURTESY OF SPERONE WESTWATER; COURTESY OF DEBS & CO.

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Wallach, Amei. "Malevolent Babies Busting Up Walls, Sharpening Darts." *The New York Times*, 1 November 1998, pp. AR47-AR48.

Malevolent Babies Busting Up Walls, Sharpening Darts

By AMEI WALLACH

Personal memory, pop culture and low comedy are the stuff of Kim Dingle's art.

LOS ANGELES

KIM DINGLE was 40 in 1991 when she burst upon the art scene here, a fully developed painter with a lithe touch and yeasty content. She painted George Washington sporting her mother's 1950's hairdo, a characteristically hunched Ed Sullivan wearing her own face as a young girl, a ham-fisted composition constructed of maps of the United States drawn from memory by real Las Vegas teen-agers.

From the beginning, she manipulated personal memory, pop culture and low comedy to undercut myths of nationhood and celebrity. In the years since, the artist has evolved a cast of hyperactive baby girl battle-axes, all named Priss, to do her icon-smashing for her. In white dresses, painted with the frothy ebullience of a Fragonard, they pummel, thwack and kick one another, ride bucking broncos on Old West wallpaper, hang lynched from a tree.

In paintings like the 1997 "Crazy's Pig," on view in the Los Angeles County Museum's permanent galleries, the Prisses commit their gleeful mayhem amidst arabesques of bright leaves and cameos of succulently rendered pigs and bumblebees. In installations like "Priss Room Installation," currently in the "Sunshine and Noir" exhibition at the Armand Hammer Museum, a papier-mâché Priss wears glasses made from Ms. Dingle's prescription and looks uncannily like her. This alter-ego Priss glares comically from her newspaper-lined crib at walls fouled with graffiti, a floor strewn with shredded toys and a black version of Priss, malevolently turning broken crib spokes into giant darts on a lethal-looking lathe.

Beginning Saturday through Nov. 19 at the Sperone Westwater Gallery in SoHo, the Prisses will make their second full-fledged appearance in a New York gallery; the first

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Ted Soqui for The New York Times

The artist Kim Dingle's alter ego, Priss, ends up in some unlikely places, including the Old West and Iwo Jima.

was four years ago at the Jack Tilton Gallery. They are older now. The two in the three-dimensional version are named Fatty and Fudge; while in the paintings, the Greek chorus of Prisses is blue.

The paintings are ultramarine blue, because Ms. Dingle is a painter first, and restricting herself to one color "is far more colorful, it heightens my sensitivity to the paint," she said recently, surrounded by plaster dust and spent tubes of paint in her Los Angeles garage-turned-studio. "Mainly I needed to do blue. Also, I wanted to work with an icy cold palette and make a very organic, human, warm subject matter."

The blue soaks into unprimed natural linen as in a 1950's Color Field painting. Hesitate and it dries past recovery. Ms. Dingle lets it rip, gets it done, translates the energy into rococo clusters of flying toddlers viciously at war, while babies run for cover and bare linen breaks through for breathing room.

She likes the way she can unfocus blue by, as she says, "melting white into it," like the blurry rim of Flow Blue china from the turn

Continued on Page 48

Malevolent Baby Girls Busting Up Walls

Continued From Page 47

of the century. Tag-sale dishware can trigger nationally treasured images as neatly as an old Life magazine, so that Ms. Dingle can dismember them. In "Untitled (Dress Pole and Livestock)," the figures are messily distributed across the face of the canvas as in a badly printed bedspread (or a richly nuanced all-over painting) and put Priss at Iwo Jima in the iconic gesture. But the "flag" she raises is a gauzy dress, while all about her bulls are trampling girls and girls are flinging babies, wrestling horses, creating carnage.

Ms. Dingle says she often advises young artists looking for a breakthrough to "take off all their clothes, put on a diaper and regress." Like Friedrich Nietzsche's Zarathustra, her alter-ego Prisses have learned to destroy in order to create. Before they can dump the heavy load of history that holds them down as women, as artists, as people, they must kill the dragon of Should's and Thou-shalt's and become an egocentric child again, "a self-rolling wheel," Nietzsche wrote, primal and anarchic. Priss, in fact, must become as rowdy as a boy.

But Ms. Dingle's children are feminine. We know this because of their frilly dresses, rendered with such care, as much cause as contradiction of the fury on their faces. Ms. Dingle looks to the oddities of real people for her outrageous inventions, as well as for her collaborations. (A real little girl executed the graffiti on the wall in the Priss installation so convincingly that her work has often been compared to that of Cy Twombly; the horses and bulls are culled from Ms. Dingle's collection of animals drawn by teen-age girls.) And it was Ms. Dingle's niece, Wadow, who was her great inspiration for Priss, she says.

Wadow is brain damaged. "She has hair like tumbleweed, and a hairdo like steel wool, that girl," Ms. Dingle says with the pell-mell, little-girl delivery of the 4-year-old that Wadow was at age 10.

"When we were growing up, she was ultra-feminine and dainty," Ms. Dingle recalls. "Her mother dressed her in these lavender, crunchy Easter Sunday dresses, but Wadow would snap into a tantrum, you know, she'd get really mad and yell. Anyway, Wadow had a birthday party, she would have all these beautifully wrapped birthday presents, and Wadow would take the bow and throw it over her head and take the ribbon and throw it over her head and take the lid and fling it, the tissue paper and fling it, the present, the bottom of the box and fling it and then go on to the next one. It was the process."

Ms. Dingle was the baby in a family of six, and by the time she was born, her mother, whom she calls Cram, was in her 40's. Cram painted by the numbers, sewed exquisite outfits to her daughter's vociferously exacting standards, docilely spent hours paging through wallpaper books so Kimberly could redecorate her teen-age bedroom and followed all the rules that the Prisses violate. Ms. Dingle's father, Duck, who died in 1976, was a cowboy. "He looked like Johnny Cash, and he sang," she says. To her, he was the John Wayne of the movies, upright and principled. John Wayne is a recurring image in her work, both as a moral force and the disposable myth of it. She once reproduced him as a cookie jar. Ms. Dingle has appropriated his eyes for Fatty's face in the "Fatty and Fudge" installation that she has just completed for the Sperone Westwater exhibition.

Fatty is baby Priss at 8, wearing an ultramarine velvet dress, with Venetian lace collar and petticoat, and plaster dust on her face and Brillo hair, because she is in the process of erupting through a floor-to-ceiling wall. Above her, on the other side of the wall, a much smaller, black Fudge, like a Rococo putta, has made the breakthrough. She's reminiscent of Mark McGwire after his 62d home run: arms up, eyes fixed, tongue out a little. Fatty is

Sperone Westwater

Priss at Iwo Jima, but the "flag" she raises is a gauzy dress, while all around her little girls are creating carnage.

having a harder time of it, and the John Wayne eye on the left wants to weep, the one on the right is mad as hell and isn't going to take it anymore. Out of anarchy has come something new: anxiety and ambivalence. Nietzsche's will to power, like all-American individualism, after all, can create murderous monsters as well as art.

"Priss may not be a full-blown battle-ax anymore," says Ms. Dingle as she dresses her. "She may be getting more depth to her feelings. I'm worried about making a 40-year-old Priss. I'm frightened of it. To take Priss as she is without growth, would be Godzilla turned loose." □

Willette, Jeanne S. "Kim Dingle and cohorts: the writer, the bad girl and the seamstress." *Artweek*, November 1998, pp. 15-16.

Kim Dingle and cohorts: the writer, the bad girl and the seamstress

By Jeanne S. M. Willette

It was the summer of Tienanmen Square and Kim Dingle and I were passing through graduate school. Having completed my coursework for my Ph.D., I was invited to teach in the art program at Claremont where Dingle became my friend. One hot day she requested a special studio visit on the subject of maps. She was concerned about her new series of map paintings because she had been told that Jasper Johns had already done maps. I looked at her maps and delivered a long discourse on how maps could not be "owned." Eyes glazed over, the artist politely accepted the fledgling teacher's judgment and continued the series. I am sure that no matter what sage advice I gave, Dingle would have acted on her own convictions. The belief of the artist in her own ideas is part of the true nature of all artistic collaborations. Years later, Robert Storr curated one of these paintings into a MOMA show on mapping. Dingle returned from the opening and told me that not only was her map hanging next to a map by Jasper Johns but also that the Man Himself was looking at her map. I have always relished my mental vision of her looking at Jasper Johns looking at her map. Whether one is collaborating with an Old Master or with a Young Mistress, the artist ultimately controls her own destiny.

To many artists, "collaboration" is an uneasy word, with the connotation of conspiracy and infiltration. When Dingle collaborates, she insists on being in charge, raising the question of how an artist works with others while remaining in total control. To make art with Dingle is to be on the receiving end of a perverse inversion of the concept of collaboration in which each maker works alone and without knowledge of what the other is doing in a kind of non-cooperative enterprise. The Surrealists used to play a game called the "Exquisite Corpse," the Corpse being a collaborative drawing composed independently by several artists, each drawer completing a section without seeing the preceding portion. The result was a joined disjointed juxtaposition of indiscrete parts, a total image that could not be imagined by any one poet. For the strong-minded and independent artist, working alone is a good way to collaborate. As long as everyone agrees to the rules of the game—that each person gets a turn—the creative powers of all participants are given free rein with no compromises. The whole point of Dingle's postmodern *cadavre exquise* is to see what happens when the separate enterprises are put together.

Take the case of *The Dingle Madonna*, painted by Dingle on the West Coast and written by me on the East Coast. I can't remember how we came up with the idea that she would paint a Madonna in a field of gold and that I would compose a piece of pompous art criticism to accompany the painting, but she mailed me a transparency of the work, I glanced at it, detached myself from the beguiling floating Madonna and (over)wrote a text that I mailed back to California. Dingle then inscribed my writing over her painting, and the piece debuted at the former Bennett/Roberts Gallery in 1991. I was back on the West Coast by then and was delighted to see the crowds reading the painting and laughing at the clash between the sacred painting and the profane writing. It read in part:

"The intention is to establish a dialectic on one hand between the writer and the artist and to establish a dialogue between the image and the word on the other hand, while refusing and refuting the primacy of one over the other. The establishment of a dialogical discourse implies a certain binary rhythm which in return suggests a bipolarity; but, as the insightful Derridaian dissection of Levi-Strauss's nature/culture dichotomy has taught us, such splitting is artificial and value laden, poisoned at the heart. It is the problem of the writer, a dilemma unfaced by the artist, who comes first, that writing in its secondness becomes an overlay, intellectually and mentally affixed upon the surface, superimposed upon its ground, encroaching upon the very fabric upon which it desires to comment."

And on and on. *The Dingle Madonna* was purchased within an hour, immediately disappeared into a private collection, and has never been exhibited since. The painting was intended to mock the pretensions of art writing while making the serious point of how unrelated art text and art image could be. The exercise succeeded because my writing was consumed by Dingle's art and disappeared into the fabric of the painting. Such is the fate of all writers.

The artist's next non-collaborator was the now-famous Annabel, whose last name will not

be revealed to protect the guilty. In her younger days, Annabel was a genuine holy terror, a true Bad Girl on the loose, a real-life model for Dingle's *Wild Girls* series. She arrived in the artist's studio in the company

Kim Dingle, (above) *Easter Violence (Girl Riding Cow)*, 1997, oil on canvas, 26" x 20"; (left) *Crazy's Pig (girls with dog)*, 1997, oil on wood, 60" x 48". (Photos courtesy of Blum & Poe, Santa Monica.)

of her mother, took one look at a painting-in-progress and demanded to be allowed to paint on it. The idea was not entirely without merit; the problem was one of the appropriate surface. This was the period when Dingle was putting the well-known *Priss* installation together and realized that the Bad Girl was just the person to write on the walls of the *Priss Room*. Panels were covered with wallpaper, smoked to give a certain grungy patina and delivered to Annabel and her friends. Dingle had no idea what the results would be until she saw the expressionistic scrawls reaching as far as a four-year-old's arms could reach. The little girls had attacked the walls with a vengeance, painting and drawing in a frenzy that would have made Jackson Pollock proud. Indeed the Dripper himself was present in a youthful photograph overlooking a site of mass destruction, presided over by not one but two Priss (rhymes with "hiss") dolls confined to a crib. The real question is who collaborated with whom? Once again, the artist stepped aside and watched while little girls—both real and unreal—wreaked havoc, leaving the viewer remembering nightmares of enraged toys coming to life at the dead of night.

I recently met the infamous Annabel and was surprised to see that she had grown up into a shy and charming little girl, all the wildness left behind with the Prisses. A visual ode to bad girls in cahoots, *The Priss Room* traveled across Europe with the *Sunshine & Noir* exhibition and has now returned to Los Angeles, to the UCLA Armand Hammer. The Priss's near relations, Fattie and Fudge, are breaking down the walls at Sperone in Rome. Let loose by Dingle, the two girls wear fancy clothes, lovingly sewn by a close friend after a design by the artist. These new girls, like their earlier counterparts, are part of a Female Fifth Column heading towards Civilized Society with the intention of disrupting its conventions. They wear fluffy dresses and patent leather shoes like military uniforms and travel in packs, laying waste to the environment like vast Cohorts of Vandals and Huns. Once again, Dingle has let loose her collaborators in the fight against social control, giving all girls everywhere the vicarious pleasure of having no inhibitions, no restraints, and, best of all, no parents.

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Pinchbeck, Daniel. “Kim Dingle’s unhappy childhood on view at Sperone Westwater.” *The Art Newspaper*, November 1998, p. 72.

THE ART NEWSPAPER, No. 86, NOVEMBER 1998

Kim Dingle’s unhappy childhood on view at Sperone Westwater

❑ The Los Angeles artist Kim Dingle’s new exhibit at **Sperone Westwater**, opening 7 November, is titled “Fatty and fudge” and includes both paintings and sculpture. Dingle is known for exploring the subversive edges of female childhood and infancy. Her new works include fantasies of pre-adolescent empowerment, as sculptures of young girls in party dresses leap from garbage-covered walls. In her blue-and-white-hued paintings, Dingle’s girls take over the traditional he-man roles in games of American masculinity, such as football or rounding up buffalo. Her Priss Room Installation of 1995 is currently displayed at the Armand Hammer Museum of Art in Los Angeles, as part of the survey exhibition, “Sunshine and noir: art in LA, 1960-97”

Kim Dingle, Untitled, 1998. Oil on linen, 213x182 cm. At Sperone Westwater

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Boodro, Michael. “People Are Talking About Art: Home Alone.” *Vogue*, November 1998, p. 242.

home alone

With Gus Van Sant about to unleash his remake of *Psycho*, and horror movies riding high at the box office, perhaps it's not surprising that artists, too, are fascinated with the mundanely macabre and the (psycho) dramas behind domesticity. Los Angeles bad-girl artist Kim Dingle has been preoccupied with children and preteens for almost a decade, but Dingle's kids are primal forces, full of anger and uncontrolled energy as they literally break through walls, round up buffalo, or engage in touch football. The sensuality of her painting and the eerie verisimilitude of her sculptures, beautifully dressed in flounces and frills, are all the more disturbing in light of the totally guilt-free pleasure with which her “girls” indulge their urges. Her show, “Fatty and Fudge,” at the Sperone Westwater gallery in New York from November 7 to December 19, consists of two new sculptures cast in papier-mâché and eight paintings. And in the traveling exhibition “Sunshine & Noir: Art in L.A. 1960–97,” at the Armand Hammer Museum of Art at UCLA through January 3, 1999, Dingle's *Priss Room Installation* is a vision of toddlers literally run amuck. Meanwhile, Miranda Lichtenstein, whose show at the Steffany Martz gallery opens November 19 and who is featured in “Spectacular Optical” at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Miami through November 29, looks at the home not from within but as a dangerous presence looming on the landscape. Her large-scale nighttime photographs of luridly lit, color-saturated suburban dream houses (*Untitled*, 1997–98, ABOVE) have a terrible beauty and, like Dingle's work, evoke the horror of home.—**MICHAEL BOODRO** *pata* ▶*244*

KIM DINGLE

ALL WRAPPED UP: “FATTY,” A SCULPTURE BY KIM DINGLE, CAST IN PAPIER-MÂCHÉ

From top: Courtesy of Shannon; MIRANDA LICHTENSTEIN; TONY CUNHA, courtesy of Sperone Westwater.

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Newhall, Edith. “Art Preview: Galleries.” *New York*, 14 September 1998, p. 126.

SWING TIME: Kim Dingle, at Sperone Westwater.

Los Angeles artist **Kim Dingle** offers up her version of American history in “Fatty and Fudge,” subversive narratives enacted by her sculptures of scary middle-aged “girls” cast from papier-mâché, and in eight large blue-and-white paintings depicting the feisty tomboys chasing runaway mustangs, rounding up buffalo, playing touch football, and tearing down trees. *(Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene Street; November 7–December 19.)*

Pagel, David. "Kim Dingle." *Art/Text*, no. 60, February-April 1998, p. 100.

Kim Dingle

Blum & Poe, Santa Monica
September 6 - October 11, 1997

The little girls in Kim Dingle's large paintings are getting bigger, but they're not growing up. Still bedecked in frilly white dresses and shiny Mary Janes, these plump pre-teens continue to sow chaos and mayhem with the best of them, yet never seem to do any lasting damage. Animated by cheerful resilience and playful buoyancy (of the sort more likely to be found in puppies than people), the amoral kidlets in these sumptuously anarchistic pictures are at once devilish and angelic—wickedly funny, yet cuddly.

Dingle paints little girls as if they were the offspring of swarming bees and heavenly creatures. The pint-sized protagonists that have populated her oeuvre for the past seven or eight years have always embodied the all-too-human tug-of-war between aggression and vulnerability. In a suite of five paintings titled, *Crazy's Pig*, Dingle's newest actresses move away from Henry Darger-esque dramas of good-versus-evil and toward a less violent, more ambiguous territory. If angels formed gangs, they would probably get into the same sort of mischief that these down-to-earth *putti* gleefully undertake, with a spirit, vigor, and seriousness that all belie their size and age. Fallen, but not daunted, they play rough-and-tumble games without dirtying their Sunday best, skinning their dimpled knees, or bruising their creamy thighs. In *Crazy's Pig (the big game)*, bespectacled tykes scrimmage like professional athletes, using squirrels, gerbils, and guinea pigs as furry footballs that get punted, passed, and kicked with Super Bowl intensity. Not a single creature, however, is ever harmed or even frightened. Like the charmed children, the furry critters float through the air with nonchalant ease.

All of Dingle's earthly cherubs inhabit a realm in which reality's rules are temporarily suspended. Here, the patterns found on old-fashioned wallpaper fuse with the high-flying style of panoramic Baroque skyscapes. Combining the down-home coziness of Americana with the theatrical panache of post-Renaissance extravagance, Dingle's eccentric paintings make strange bedfellows of their influences to insist that art works best when it does the unexpected. This is the world of virtuoso painting, where time doesn't stand still as much as it slows down to a crawl, as viewers are lured into the state of awe-struck amazement art often induces. This is also the world of pre-adolescence, when society's moral codes have not yet taken root in kids. At this moment, a youngster's incomprehension of the consequences of her actions gives her the terrible freedom to do whatever she feels like—only then to discover that all actions have consequences, sometimes ones that cannot be undone, but only regretted. The beauty of Dingle's art is that it invites viewers to put such grim responsibilities on hold, and to savor painting's time-stalling (if not time-stopping) magic. The fall from grace may have already happened, but with these dazzling paintings, life is too interesting to think of such an event as a tragedy.

David Pagel

KIM DINGLE, *CRAZY'S PIG (CRAZY'S PIG)*, 1997, OIL ON WOOD, 60 x 96 INCHES.

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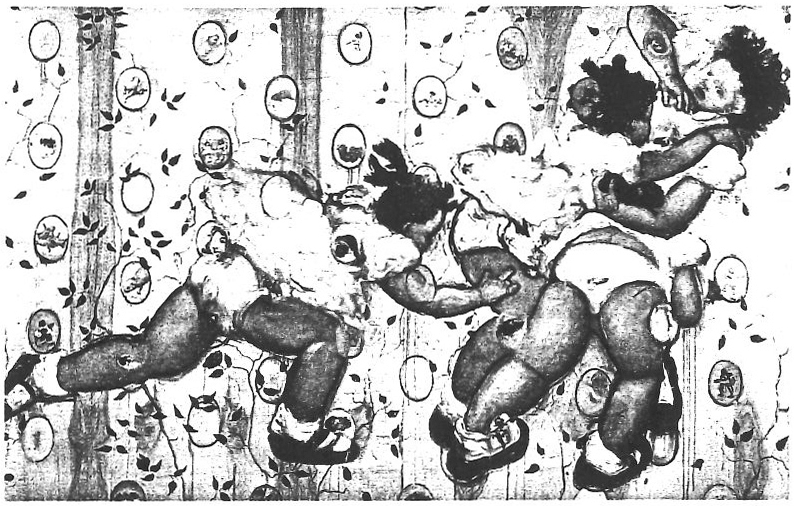
Harvey, Doug. "Kim Dingle at Blum & Poe." *Art Issues*, November/December 1997, p. 45.



Kim Dingle
***Crazy's Pig*, 1997**
Oil on wood
60" x 96"

Kim Dingle

at BLUM & POE. 6 September–11 October

Kim Dingle's latest show of oils on wood marks her return to painting after the one-two punch of her brilliantly half-baked culling of the Norton Family Foundation collection at the Santa Monica Museum of Art and last year's five-year survey of her work at Otis Gallery, which culminated with the recreation of her popular *Priss* fecal-smear installation of 1995. Rather than engaging in a closed loop of self-one-upmanship, Dingle has chosen here to restate the tonic note of barely controlled disarray that energized those institutional eruptions with alternately engaging and repellent depictions of brawling and careering little girls in starchy pinafores and patent-leather shoes.

Having dismantled and inverted the structural vocabulary with which she chooses to operate, it is safe to assume that Dingle considers her territory well-enough marked to afford her some slack. Not that this indicates laziness—Dingle's work invariably *relies* on slack to create a loose enough rein to take in both her idiosyncratic analytical intuitions and her unfashionably psychotherapeutic narrative evolution, and somehow parlay them into a synergistic unity. And while in terms of an externally mandated stylistic progression the 1997 "Crazy Pig" suite of paintings acquisitions scant new territory, it is clear from the artist's statements, and her previous work, that such reassuring displays of incremental novelty are tertiary to the urgent psychological theater and dosages of art-theory piss-taking around which her reputation has been built.

In returning to these more contained fictions, Dingle recovers much of the charm and humor that have acted to destabilize our defenses against the surging anger that courses through her art. The comforting familiarity of her impressionistic rendering, muted palette, softly repetitive gestures, and decorative compositional allusions lull us into an openness to darker materials that in another situation (the *Priss Room* installation, for instance) we would be quicker to reject. Indeed, Dingle seems to have drawn back from the Darger-lite atrocities that peopled her earlier canvases in favor of tableaux of implied or ritualized violence, such as the ambiguous event repeated in *Francine's Butt*, where a Priss descending a staircase may have been shoved, or may have hurled herself, or may not even be in motion, but just languidly sprawled upside-down. Likewise, the huddle of Prisses in *The Big Game* are depicted in various stages of relatively organized full-contact scrimmage using a guinea pig for a football. The largest painting in the show, *Crazy's Pig*, isolates one of these episodes and, at first, recalls the stompings and throttlings of Dingle's previous works. As we recognize the freeze-frame tackle for what it is, however, we experience a curious flip-flop: We briefly reclassify the activity as nonviolent and are overwhelmed by the aggressive eroticism of the arrangement, with its rough-and-tumble gropings, frilly underthings, and gerbils. We recover our senses soon enough—football is a violent sport, these are just little girls, that poor hamster, etcetera; but for just a moment, a window opens in the morally claustrophobic, sexually disenfranchising conference room of palatable discourse, and some wild air gets in. Like it or not, we won't forget it.

In part, Dingle is attempting a didactic art that, rather than telling us what thoughts good people should think, shows us what is unnecessary clutter and how things look when we learn not to think so much. Throughout, she is giving one of her sly periodic fuck-you's to the preponderance of disembodied logos-headed theory-mongers who spoil all our fun. She is simultaneously refining her vocabulary and tightening the balance between seduction and subversion that her work maintains, in order to more efficiently reach the audience and achieve the results she desires. Paradoxically, for all their laudable social reifications, Dingle's paintings deny formal and conceptual conceits their customary precedence over the sheer act of art-making, by the very same sort of antagonistic grappling her work depicts. It is at such cleft points that Dingle's art continues to occur—not in formal or theoretical innovation nor in psychological or social immersion, but at the crux of these jostling bodies of contemporary concern, where a very uneasy truce holds—for the time being.

Kozloff, Max. "Sunshine & Noir: Art in L.A. 1960-1997." *Artforum*, November 1997, pp. 110-111.

"SUNSHINE & NOIR: ART IN L.A. 1960–1997"

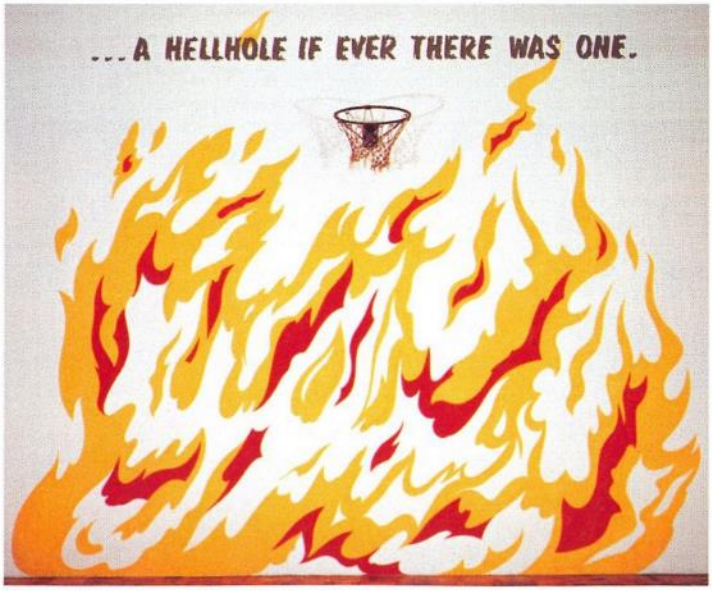
LOUISIANA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

MAX KOZLOFF

Los Angeles artists enjoy the unique yet dubious privilege of living in the lap of mass culture. But if they feel proprietary toward the mythmaking machine of movies and television, their closeness has also encouraged a psychological remove from it. Though they often allude to frenzies on the screen, their central concern is with pop dramas of the mind. As a vehicle for our collective fantasies that give a less than social pleasure, the movie is to them as inevitable a theme as nature is to "landscapists."

Such an overview is offered by "Sunshine & Noir," a deliberately potluck exhibition of Los Angeles art, 1960–97, curated by Lars Nittve and Helle Crenzien, at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art near Copenhagen. But the show's value as a historical record or critical proposal is diluted by odd emphases, equally strange exclusions (among them even some males), and the presence of lesser works by significant artists. Louisiana's display is crowded with art by white men who frequently behave like bad boys. From what is shown, for instance, no one would guess that Los Angeles had been a hotbed of feminist art in the '70s. Robert Heinecken, the central figure of LA Conceptual photography, is omitted. Absent too are the witty images of artists such as Erika Rothenberg, Betye Saar, and Carole Caroompas. But the imbalances of this survey of more than fifty artists and close to two hundred works did not prevent it from being provocative. All around me, surprising continuities revealed themselves. I roamed through it, alert to chance accents in which native Los Angeles content—once flavorsome, now savvy—is picked up in widespread idioms.

By the '80s, the media theme had become such a topical spectacle to far-flung publics that LA artists ceased being self-conscious about their base in Los Angeles—ceased to think of themselves as local. None of their often obscure movie references could take anything away from the unsavory magnitude of their vision. Yet how much more cryptic and denatured, even in its fondness, is their treatment of visual entertainment when compared to the entertainment itself. In particular, Los Angeles artists of the last thirty-seven years led the way to a view of our media, and the implications behind them, as netherworld phenomena. The British architectural critic Reyner Banham once remarked that, as certain scholars learned "Italian in order to read Dante in the original, I learned how to drive in order to read Los Angeles in the original." Insofar as any of this applies to the City of Angels, the key word here is "Dante."

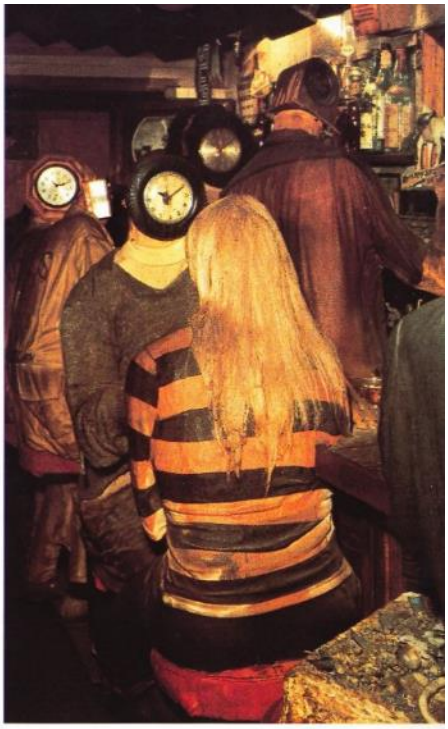


Left to right: **Alexis Smith, *Ring of Fire*, 1982,** painted wall with basketball hoop, ca. 10' 11⅞" x 15' 11¾". **Edward Kienholz, *The Beanery*, 1965,** mixed media, ca. 99⅝" x 21' 9¾" x 74⅛". Installation view.

In a car, stunned by glare, even wearing shades, one is channeled by sulfurous freeways, over long distances, through unpeopled spaces that lack any texture. The mobile solitude of it all, daily repeated, may have done wonders to impair any idea of community in the art of this sun-shocked, sprawling city. As depictions of urban nothings on a strip, Edward Ruscha's photos of gas stations and John Baldessari's windshield views of National City, California, are deadpan classics.

The absence of human street life may tell us something about the tactile extremes of Los Angeles art, which typically veers between hypergloss, to which not even a mote could cling, and soiled rag you wouldn't touch. In the uninviting "skin" of their work, artists enacted metaphors of impossible perfections and uncontrollable disorders. It's tempting to regard these polarities as markers for the disquiet of bodies alienated from the material world. Los Angeles freeways have, in fact, been known as breeding grounds for unspeakable rancors that eat away one's reason. Such was the import of a 1993 film, *Falling Down*, in which a frustrated, white-collar motorist, played by Michael Douglas, blows his cool in a killing spree.

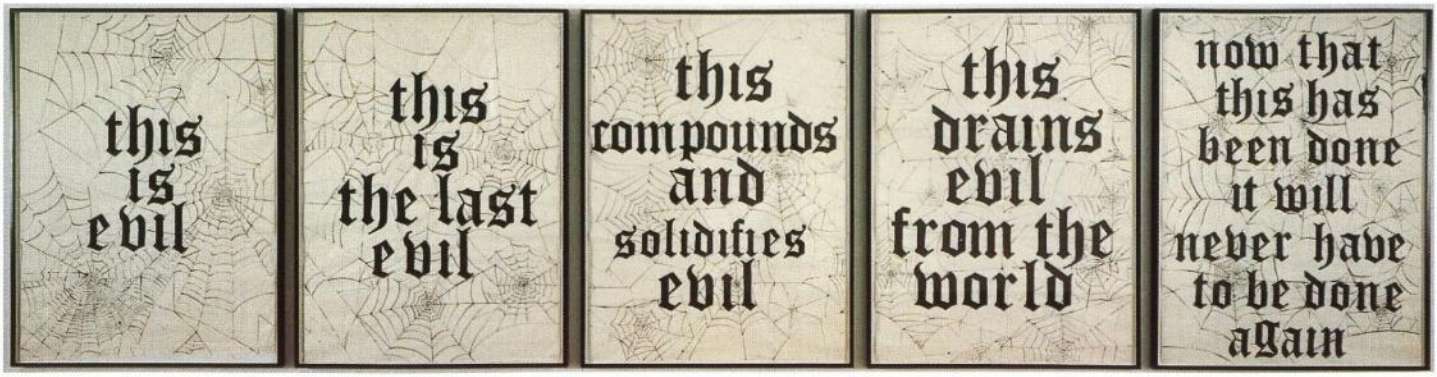
This "pressure cooker" atmosphere had been prefigured in the late '50s and early '60s, the Ferus Gallery days of Los Angeles art. The hardened "syrup" of John McCracken's planks and the spray-lacquered, chevron paintings of Billy Al Bengston have their polar opposite in the sweaty, glutinous lumpy surfaces of Edward Kienholz's *The Beanery*, 1965, his squalid mockup of an artists' bar. As a motif in Los Angeles art, the repressive cleanliness of hi-tech vies with a rhapsody of disgust.



Stemming from Kienholz, but minus the artist's moralism, the theme of disgust is certainly continued in more recent performances and videos by Paul McCarthy as well as in the installations of Mike Kelley.

The entrance to "Sunshine & Noir" is flagged by Chris Burden's *L.A.P.D. Uniform*, 1993, a row of black, outsized cop suits, each equipped with badge, nightstick, and handgun, spread like cutouts from a child's book. With their immaculate, sharp-as-knives creases, so unlike clothes that have ever been worn—or rather so *like* those that are worn for the first time in coffins—these headless, Darth Vader icons exude a satanic aura. Done two years after the Rodney King beating, they conjure a black and Latino view of the infamous Los Angeles police as archangels of violence.

Those artists who dredge their childhood memories and feelings for subject matter are the rule in this show, not the exception. Repeatedly, "Sunshine & Noir" is colored by an evocation of the juvenile that presumes to be an engagement with the present. Rather than an innocence of perception, "kid stuff" in this context implies the scariness of the world. Jim Shaw, in *Billy's Self-Portrait #1*, 1986, makes it trivial and "jokey" with his comic book bearing the faux



Top to bottom: **Mike Kelley, *Apology (From "Australiana") No. I, II, III, IV, V*, 1984,** acrylic on paper, each ca. 64⅛ x 48". **Kim Dingle, *Priss Room Installation*, 1994–95,** mixed media, dimensions variable. Installation view.

title *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. Charles Ray induces it with some little genetic glitches in his effigies of the American family. His work retails Hallmark presences that are fermented a little and tremble on the uncanny. David Lynch would like them a lot. I take the point of the parallel made with fairy tales, whose structure underlies so much of the movies. And I am aware of the gothic, fin-de-siècle mood that prevails in the big studios (*Batman* 2, etc.). But I don't care for the "Toons" version of gothic fable in much of Kelley's and McCarthy's work. No matter how dark-minded, they shoot at obvious targets, too often with a diarrheic style full of ketchup. The effect is not highfalutin "abject," as some have claimed, but just plain silly, or rather mean silly.

Despite its frequent appearances, kitsch, in fact, is not at the center of the Los Angeles aesthetic. "Artistic" kitsch retails unearned effects and wallows in inverted class snobbery, not typical of a scene that still prizes a "laid back" manner. A fine instance of this latter attitude is found in Alexis Smith's installations and smaller collages (the piece the curators chose, *Ring of Fire*, 1982, was, however, untypically weak). "Sunshine & Noir" neglects to show us how this key Los Angeles artist has put outworn popular culture to work as a memory device that opens up a social landscape. A piece of hers from 1980 contains the following, each of its phrases in a frame with sides slanted as if seen from a speeding car: "Hello Hollywood/ Goodbye Farm/It Gave McDonald/That Needed Charm/Burma Shave." Here is a work by a pitch-perfect specialist in American vernacular who can summon up the myth of a whole era—even its pathos—as if glimpsed in a roadside jingle. The reminiscent tone in her work presupposes a grownup mind that looks back with rue upon our earlier rites of passage. It's a tone encapsulated by the line Smith put under a prom photo: "We clinked. 'To all the dumb dreams that never happen,' she said." Smith invents voice-overs from pulp fiction superimposed upon ads, film stills, and postcards flecked with stardust, then presented in frames found in the flea market. She exposes our tinsel romanticism with an intelligence worthy of John Heartfield and an affection all her own.

In contrast, Kim Dingle's *Priss Room Installation*, 1994–95, with its Sunday-best baby mannequins—here, one black, the other white—dukes up in a crib, brings you into real contact with the presocial. The "bad boys" have imitated the presocial only in vain because they have forgotten it could be so elegant. Dingle collaborated with a three-year-old, whose back-wall scribbles were likened by certain critics to Cy Twomblys. But I am put in mind of such Los Angeles predecessors as Edward Kienholz and Charles Ray, whose art *Priss Room* mutates with a singular force. It deploys the scariness of the one and the creepy decorum of the other to evoke the rage of little girls. Details, like the target on the wall and the mess on the floor, speak of a belligerence that is concentrated in the peevish, somehow aged faces of Dingle's baby dolls. They look as if they have a score to settle. Once seen, their expression burns into memory. To be sure, this furor is puny when compared with the violence in shoot-'em-ups, noir, or any other genre. But it is more unsettling. It goes beyond the conventions of popular genre with a poetry that shows where psychic tumult begins—in a nursery. □

IN PARTICULAR, LOS ANGELES ARTISTS OF THE LAST THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS LED THE WAY TO A VIEW OF OUR MEDIA, AND THE IMPLICATIONS BEHIND THEM, AS NETHER-WORLD PHENOMENA.

Max Kozloff's collection of essays entitled *Lone Visions, Crowded Frames*, was recently published by the University of New Mexico Press.

"Sunshine & Noir: Art in L.A. 1960–1997" travels to the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany, this fall; it will open at the Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporaneo, Italy, next spring before traveling to the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center in Los Angeles in fall 1998.

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Kandel, Susan. "Sugar, Spice and Everything Nice? Not Quite." *Los Angeles Times*, 19 September 1997, p. F26.

Sugar, Spice and Everything Nice? Not Quite

ART REVIEWS

By SUSAN KANDEL
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

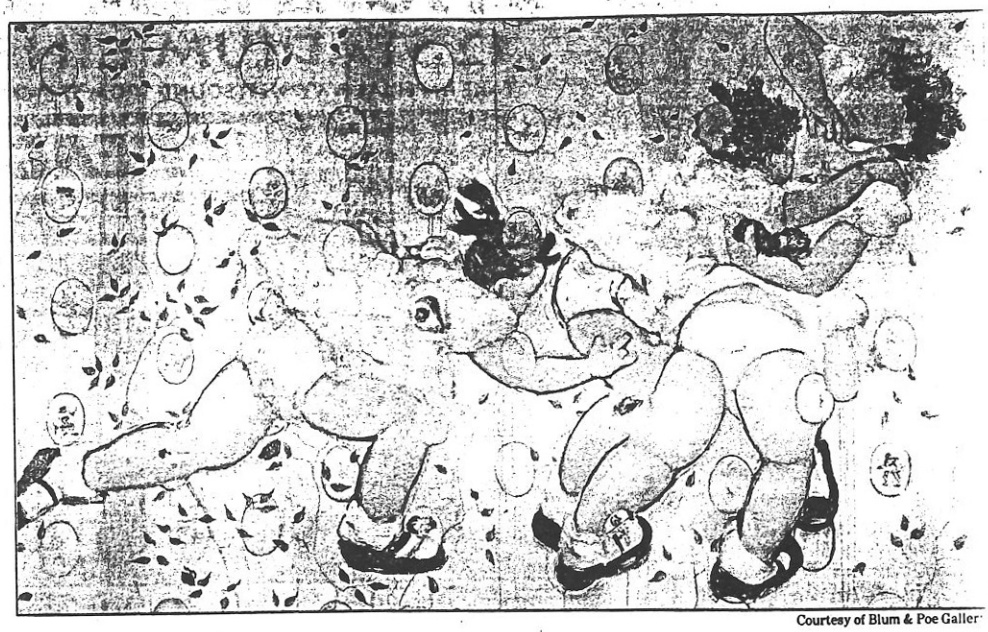
As lusty and fearless as the marauding little girls they depict, **Kim Dingle**'s paintings at Blum & Poe Gallery embody old myths about the savagery of the young and make up new ones about a brave new world of contentedly fallen angels. That the paintings betoken more than revenge, however, is both their power and grace.

If this newest generation of painted curly-haired moppets in frilly dresses, white lace socks and Mary Janes isn't as aggressive as their predecessors—who loved to wrestle nude in doorways, throw fits, stones or one another out windows—they still behave like tiny revolutionaries with nothing to lose, playing touch football with unsuspecting guinea pigs or watching blithely as grown-ups tumble down precipitous stairways. But most often they turn upon themselves, transforming their would-be power trip into a collective suicide mission, all the more poignant for its misfired *machisma*.

It might be said that, like Nicole Eisenman's cartoony murals and drawings of wild-eyed Amazons torturing legions of dimwitted, male antagonists, Dingle's paintings ooze irony from their very pores. Yet irony connotes a certain knowingness, perhaps even a smugness that these paintings entirely lack.

On the other hand, Dingle is no sentimentalist. She is a ferocious painter with a delicate touch (think Fragonard, especially when you look at those pearly-white dresses), all the better to mislead her viewers.

Guiding us astray is one of her longtime strategies. Erasing and transposing remain two of her favorite tricks.



Courtesy of Blum & Poe Gallery

Kim Dingle's 1997 oil on wood "Crazy's Pig" depicts a brave new world of contentedly fallen angels

Camouflage is another, and it's the prime strategy of most of the paintings shown here, which are crammed with details both obfuscatory and not: the luscious grain of the unpainted wood support, tangles of ivy leaves that aren't content to remain in the background, intermittent fecal smears or globs and dozens upon dozens of exaggeratedly bucolic or suggestively sinister vignettes, which occasionally—magically—worm their way up somebody's dress.

Messing around with generic conventions has been Dingle's way to seize control of a medium that is still hostile to interlopers. It remains an exhilarating thing to watch.

Some might grumble about Dingle's continued allegiance to painting her pint-sized alter egos. Perhaps she realizes that to abandon them would be to mimic their own fatal bravado.

Wilson, William. "Eccentric 'Glimpse' at Norton Collection." *Los Angeles Times*, 12 December 1995, p. F12.

Eccentric 'Glimpse' at Norton Collection

ART REVIEW

By WILLIAM WILSON
TIMES ART CRITIC

It's not intended as a seasonal feel-good exhibition, but the new main-stage show at the Santa Monica Museum of Art has that spirit. Titled "A Glimpse of the Norton Collection as Revealed by Kim Dingle," it's a buoyant, antic exercise in intertwined eccentricity.

The players are Eileen and Peter Norton, a now-well-known pair of multimillionaire L.A. art collectors and philanthropists. They seem to have been born from the best dreams of bohemian idealism.

He retired young after making his bundle inventing a computer software program called Norton Utilities. It has relieved thousands of panicked PC users by doing such things as retrieving lost files and heading off potential disaster by fixing fragmented discs.

She is an African American from Watts and a former ghetto elementary schoolteacher. Norton purposely searched her out with a personals ad because he thinks black women are gorgeous. Their interracial alliance is commemorated in a double "portrait" by Byron Kim. It consists of just two swatches of skin makeup, one Peter's color, the other Eileen's.

Elevated to the ranks of the idle rich, they decided to establish a charitable foundation concentrating on emerging offbeat local art but not excluding other stuff. Such art suits them temperamentally, especially if it deals with the social issues of this multicultural age. One example on view is David Hammons' "Rocky." It consists of a beat-up decorative wrought-iron stand topped by a stone wearing a toupee of kinky black hair.

Dingle is a mid-career artist in the Norton mold. She likes to collect things like erasers and marbles. She has a penchant for jails, which is reflected in a piece on view by New Yorker Robert Gober, "Prison Window." It consists of a wall with a barred window high up. Through it one sees blue sky, but it's not clear whether we are inside looking out or vice versa. Here is the fantasy of many artists who so value their creative privacy they think a cell might actually be a nice thing.

But Dingle adds a new twist to Gober's piece. Normally viewers see only the front of the wall. Here it is installed so that one can walk behind it to discover its reality as kind of a stage set, a fake thing. It suggests the truth that the most common prison is one's own mind.

Seeing from a different angle is Dingle's big idea here. On arrival, viewers are liable to think, "Oops, I must have arrived too early. This show's not properly hung yet." There are crates all over and a lot of works are still wrapped. But this is the way artist-curator Dingle wanted it. Preparing to select from the Nortons' 1,200-work collection, she became fascinated with the whole mechanism of storing, shipping, sorting and protecting the art. In effect, she made her own artwork out of the Norton collection. The meaning of the whole is reinterpreted.

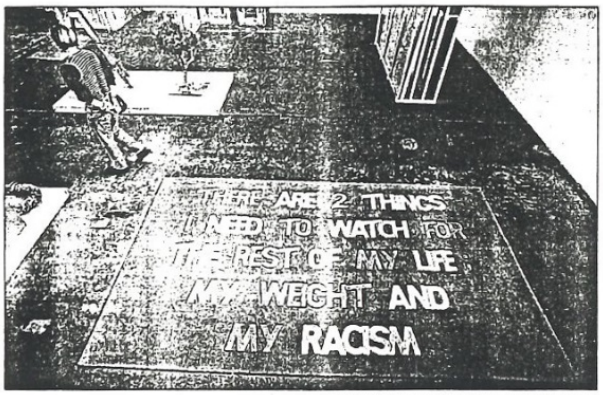
But how? A hostile and paranoid mind could easily see this arrangement as exposing art's true estate as merchandise. Wrapping the Lari Pittman painting or those Dennis Oppenheim deer in plastic shows they're nothing but commodities to be shipped here and there to aggrandize the ego of the collectors and drive up the value of the objects.

But that's not what she's up to. Dingle emphasizes the care with which the objects are protected by people—often artists themselves—who respect them. Even the "storage room," where we see little art except in Polaroid photos pasted on labeled boxes has an aura of gentle affection.

By the same token, the Nortons' collecting habits could be savaged by a jaded hard-nose. Nothing here but a bunch of warmed-over examples of Dada and sentimentalized social commentary.

Wrong again. Everything here, from Carrie Mae Weems' photo of a black mother and child doing makeup to Donald Lipski's big oval plastic tube full of water-lily pods speaks volumes more than that.

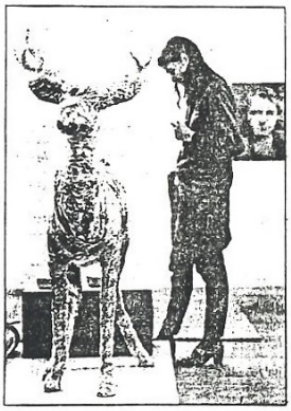
Charles Ray's 8-foot female store window mannequin may be in the assemblage tradition, but it has something chilling and hilariously new to say about the way men hold women in awe. Carter Potter's abstract compositions of film strips may hark back to Mondrian, but they also provoke new thoughts about art and the media. Even as interpreted by Dingle, the exhibition marks the most extensive showing of the Norton collection to date. Taken together, it reveals enthusiasm, humor, courage, intelligence, individuality and toughness. This exhibition returns the collecting and interpretation of works of art to an act of love. There are worse things to have on our mind at this or any time of year.



Photos by AXEL KOESTER / For The Times

A sign is part of the exhibition at the Santa Monica Museum of Art.

Kim Dingle puts a spin on the collection in "Storage Room," above, and a deer she wrapped in plastic.



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Knight, Christopher. "Exposing the Inner Child of U.S. Politics." *Los Angeles Times*, 3 December 1995, pp. 63-65.

Exposing the Inner Child of U.S. Politics

Review: Kim Dingle's provocative work uses images of children to debunk myths of our nation's supposed innocence.

By Christopher Knight

Priss is back. When last seen, eight or nine months ago, the terrible toddler was tearing up Blum & Poe Gallery in Santa Monica, shredding her cuddly stuffed animals, smearing paint and crayon and who-knows-what on the pretty lambs dotting the wallpaper in her nursery, busting up the prison bars of her confining crib with power tools and generally wreaking havoc with malicious glee. Now she's doing it again, this time at the Otis Art Gallery, in the final room of a six-year survey of artist Kim Dingle's paintings, sculptures and installation works.

For a fussy porcelain doll dressed in lovely lace, crisp white crinolines and black Mary Janes, Priss has a decidedly ferocious temper.

Priss comes in several versions, black or white, with or without glasses. Her thick bushy hair is made from dense steel wool, which seems particularly tough and unruly against her smooth porcelain skin. Standing with her feet planted apart, as if in grim determination, and with her pudgy little fingers clenched into a baby fist, she exudes all the delicate charm of a pit bull.

Her face keeps you riveted, like a deer in the headlights. It feels pinched, as if the clay had begun to collapse into itself around her nose. Priss' big eyes are narrowed into diagonal slits above a wide, thin-lipped mouth, which is fixed in a permanent sneer pocked on either end by deep dimples. She looks like nothing you've ever seen before, all the while feeling oddly familiar.

Now that Priss is back, as the edgy climax to the enlightening Otis show, she has been given a context that makes the mixed attraction/repulsion of her prickly persona even more richly compelling than before. Surrounded by Dingle's earlier work, it seems plain that the childish, mean-spirited little devil, who has thrown such a wicked tantrum, is in fact a veiled portrait. You've seen that crabbed and pudgy face before, because Priss looks suspiciously like Newt Gingrich decked out in Shirley Temple drag.

Orphanage anyone?

The show offers numerous hints that Dingle's dolls aren't purely anonymous little girls. Even if you didn't notice the small framed photograph of Speaker Gingrich hanging on one of the cribs in the rambunctious nursery installation, her earlier work frankly displays a loopy interest in portraiture, gender reversals, the trauma of childhood and figures from American political history and pop culture, all mixed into an eccentric stew.

Courtesy Blum & Poe Gallery

THE FACE IS FAMILIAR: For Priss, there's a sneer between those dimples.

A group of altered photographs from 1991 and 1992 show classic figures from American history who have been distinctively transformed. One is a photograph of Abraham Lincoln, painted over to convert "The Great Emancipator" into a portrait of Geronimo, the valiant Apache chief. Another switches George Washington into Annie Oakley, while still others meld the face of Dingle's grandmother with that of Ronald Reagan and Dingle herself with Jimmy Carter.

In a portrait of Washington in the guise of Dingle's grandmother, who is further decked out in the role of Queen Elizabeth, the layering of personal and social identity accelerates.

The show also includes various altered baby pictures. Through the painted addition of a hand grenade, a rifle or a pair of boxing gloves on little cutie's fists, sweet formal photographs of happily cooing babies become quiet, sneak-attack depth-charges. The painted photographs—sort of "kitten with a whip" for the junior set—throw into doubt bland assertions of youthful innocence.

The mixing and matching take a further spin in two funny and eccentric oil paintings. "Portrait of Ed Sullivan as a Young Girl" (1990) shows him/her in an awkwardly iconic, cross-armed pose, ready to emcee the "really big show" of adulthood to come. "Baby Cram Dingle as George Foreman" (1991) fuses a baby picture of Dingle's white grandma ("Cram") with one of the bald black fighter, creating a strange but pointed familial legacy for the artist.

The social and political tangle of American history lurks in most of Dingle's work, and often it's bound up with images of babies and children. In fact, heavily armed and utterly raucous babies and children.

Dingle sometimes paints on baby blankets and kiddie wallpaper, mingling generically cheerful cultural images with privately traumatic ones. Innocuous pictures of sweetness and light bleed through to permanently tattoo a little girl riding a giant panda, while bucolic scenes of country life are populated with wild girls, one of whom has been hanged in a tree.

The idea of childhood as a placid time of serene innocence and, well, childlike wonder gets shredded in Dingle's work. When deftly interwoven with assorted icons from American history, the debunking of myths of youthful innocence also lacerates our common pieties about a golden age of guilt-free American life.

Our frequent attempts to identify the cataclysmic event that signals the tragic loss of American innocence—JFK's assassination, the national humiliation in Vietnam, the scandal of Watergate, the explosion of the space shuttle—show how foolishly ingrained is our naive faith. For how could any nation, founded on near genocide and made wealthy on the backs of slaves, ever have thought itself innocent in the first place?

Dingle has found a distinctive way to explore politics, both public and personal, in her art. Her best paintings and sculptures feel like social observations made by a citizen of this strange republic, because their disparate, ambiguous layers reflect the actual situation of politics in contempo-

rary life. They're free of one-dimensional hectoring.

While Dingle mounts a wicked satire of current politics, she also asserts her own position. Her sculptural sex-change operation, transforming Gingrich into an angry little girl who is sometimes white, sometimes black, slyly remakes the conservative Southern pol (and former history teacher) into a tiny feminist and champion of civil rights. Priss is furious all right, but her tantrum is far from petty. She emits a righteous yowl.

As she does, she also takes on a variety of recent art. Jasper Johns's paintings are recalled by dart boards hung up in the nursery, for Priss' target practice. Her furious, fecal scribbles on the wallpaper put you in mind of Cy Twombly's art.

It's Mike Kelley's work that is probably the most potent precedent for Dingle's own. His 1989 "Reconstructed History" photographs are pictures culled from high school text books that Kelley drew over and transformed—such as Lincoln made into Charles Manson, whose helter-skelter ranting warned of a race war to come. And his well-known sculptures made from abject and degraded stuffed animals achieved notoriety for their own shrewd assault on American pieties of childhood innocence.

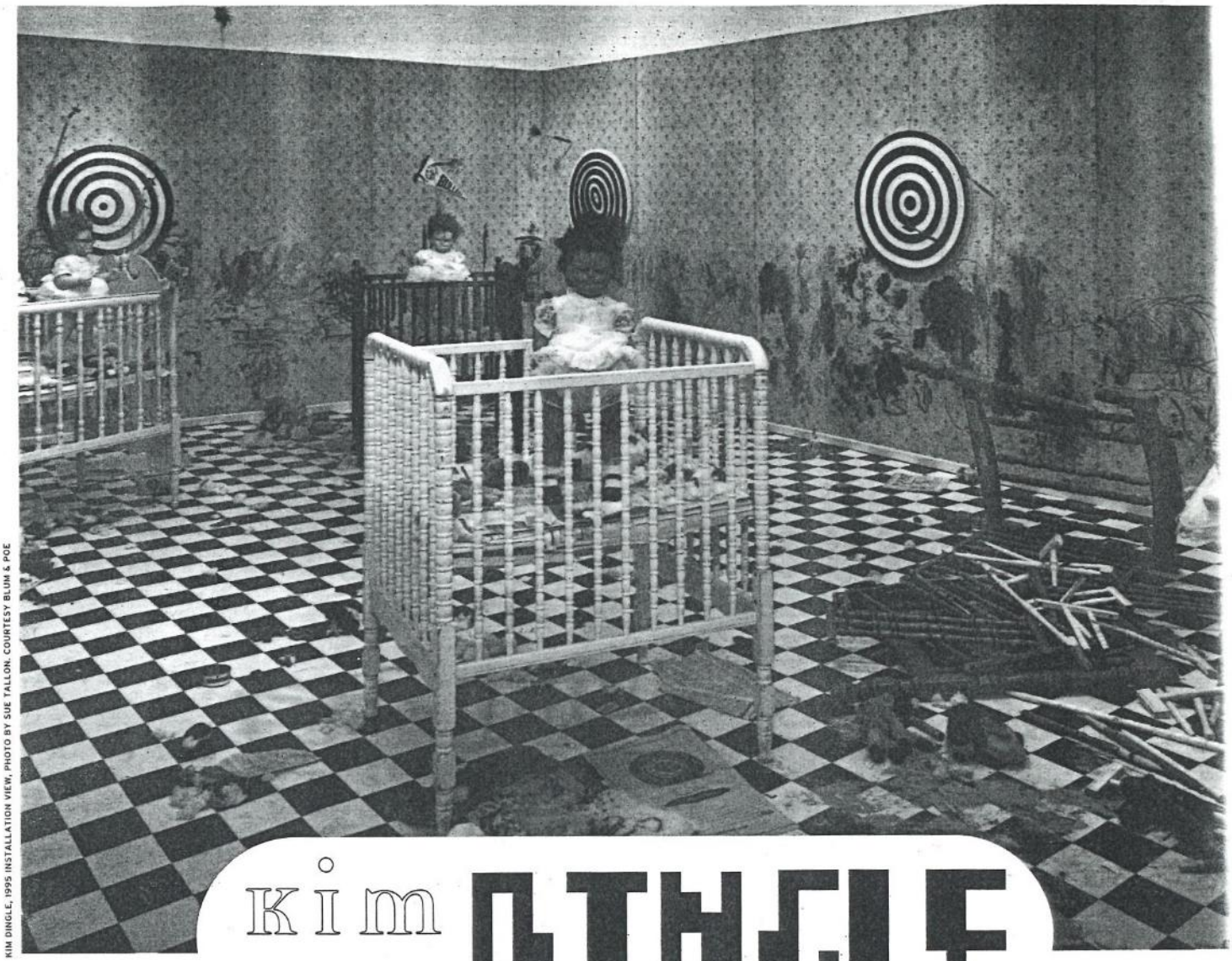
Dingle acknowledges Kelley by way of the tatty stuffed animals strewn about Priss' squalid nursery. Then she gleefully performs the necessary artistic patricide by yanking out their stuffing and chopping them up with Priss' handy table saw.

The Priss installation is Dingle's most significant body of work to date. (A new group of cast-ceramic "John Wayne Cookie Jars" will at the very least cause a slack-jawed double-take.) One hallmark of great portraiture is that it goes to a core of human identity; Priss certainly does that.

Want proof? Dingle's exhibition opened at Otis while the federal government was shut down because of the budget impasse. Two days before, Speaker Gingrich, recently returned from Yitzhak Rabin's funeral on a now-notorious flight aboard Air Force One, was on the cover of the New York Daily News next to the insolent headline: "Cry Baby; Newt's Tantrum."

A caricature showed the Speaker as a sobbing child in diapers. Hey, they could have just run a picture of Priss. □

Pagel, David. “Kim Dingle.” *BOMB*, no. 52, Summer 1995, pp. 12-14.



KIM DINGLE, 1995 INSTALLATION VIEW, PHOTO BY SUE TALLON. COURTESY BLUM & POE

Kim DINGLE

Talking to Kim Dingle is a little like playing pinball: words and thoughts bounce rapidly back-and-forth, often going nowhere, without any rhythm. Sometimes, however, the conversation simply takes off, skidding and skipping from one idea to the next, making connections that aren't really rational, yet still make a lot of sense. To me, Kim is living proof of how weird normal American life is. By giving us a glimpse of the everyday from a point of view that's slightly off-kilter, her paintings and installations make vivid the absurdities we regularly edit from our lives. Dingle grew up on a cul-de-sac in Los Angeles, having spent her adolescence in Las Vegas. For the past five years she has lived and worked in two little run-down houses on a small, weed-choked hill just east of downtown L.A. Her junk-cluttered compound isn't visible from the street; once you've climbed its cement stairs which wind, tunnel-like, through overgrown shrubs, it seems you could be in any small town in the country – anytime during the past 75 years. And when Kim starts talking, these niggling, little details aren't clarified: normal time and space drift away as you're drawn into her rich inner world.

DAVID PAGEL

DAVID PAGEL: I understand you hired a three-year-old assistant. How's that working out?
KIM DINGLE: Fine.
DP: Why did you choose such a young one?
KD: Her mother brought her to my studio. I was talking about my work and showing some of the photographs and Annabelle, the kid, wanted to draw on all of my paintings. Which scared me. (*laughter*) Later I thought, why not? She painted all the walls for my installation in New York and Los Angeles.
DP: What's her preferred medium?
KD: Food. (*laughter*) Whatever there is. I talked to an art educator, a friend who works with children a lot, and she told me that three-year-olds are not interested in color, unless they're very unusual kids. They're into the process and how it feels sensually and the kinetic movement. And their attention span is about twenty minutes. About the same as mine. I can paint for twenty minutes at a time.
DP: This isn't the first time you've used other people as collaborators or assistants in your work.
KD: No. In the *Paintings of the West* show I had a couple of hundred horse drawings by teenage girls. Some were made specifically for the show and others were collected from women who had done them as teenagers.
DP: From school projects?
KD: No, they do them naturally.
DP: Is this a genre?
KD: Yes. Teenage Girl Horse Drawings is a genre.
DP: And teenage girls draw horses more than, say...
KD: Rockets.
DP: Or sports cars or wars?
KD: Right. I've collected other drawings from teenagers. I asked them to draw the United States from memory, off the top of their heads and I put them together in one piece. You know, they're as individual as your face or your fingerprints, and they're a psychological portrait more than people would like to think. For example, a woman who was extremely angry at men: I remember her maps had no peninsulas anywhere. But the Great Lakes were really deep. (*laughter*) And another artist, a very petite person, made the tiniest map. You'd have to know the personalities to make any connections; the maps were very human, you would recognize them as the U.S. but, there were many, many shapes. In fact, that's what I called it: *The United Shapes of America*.
DP: Is it true that your mother has snapshots of cattle in your family album?
KD: Elephants, rear ends of elephants, cows, hamsters, cats, goats, lions, monkeys, big turtles, chickens, flying squirrels, ground squirrels... did I say horses?
DP: Not yet.
KD: Sheep, lot of livestock.
DP: Any children?
KD: Yes, but she cut our heads off in every picture.
DP: Any speculation on what was going on there?
KD: She was a lousy photographer.
DP: So animals were important to your mother?
KD: No.
DP: No?
KD: No. They were important to us kids and my father. Everyone but my mother. Animals are abnormally important in my family.
DP: Because of farming or other intimate connections to furry creatures?
KD: Very intimate connections with animals. I grew up in a cul-de-sac, in a bedroom community in Los Angeles. We had all those animals in the backyard.
DP: As pets, or as family extensions?
KD: What's the difference?
DP: Your paintings have a lot of children in them, mostly babies. Was that a rough transition?
KD: No, some animals are starting to creep in there, but animals are too painful for me.
DP: To think about, or to paint?
KD: Both. I can't watch *Old Yeller*, *The Incredible Journey*, *The Yearling*, or nature shows.
DP: Lassie's just out.
KD: I could never see it. I can't. Animals and children are on the same psychic plane. They are interchangeable. It's easier for me to look at children since I have transferred all human tragedy to the lives of animals. Having any pet, you know, a stupid bird, means many, many tragedies. You can't have any loved ones in your life without many tragedies. For me, it's all symbolized and pinpointed in a single animal's life. A mutt. Or a cow.
DP: So children are easier.
KD: I can distance myself, it's less painful to look at a child.
DP: And most of the kids in your paintings are little girls?
KD: Yes. Being a girl is my background.
DP: Do you think of yourself as an artist who has a feminist agenda?
KD: No. Well, no more than you. Of course I have a feminist consciousness.
DP: Your work has always struck me as being more personal or quirky or individualistic or eccentric rather than political, in a general sense.
KD: Well, you're right. I admit I'm caught up in being alive. And these children are about vulnerability and being alive. The fact that we all walk around, and eat and breathe and have ideas ... and no batteries, no cords. I mean, what's holding all this up? It's just amazing to me. I am in awe of it. I'll hold my animal up, and turn him around and look ...
DP: Your dog?
KD: Yes. Look for the place where you put in the batteries. What makes him go? And we're made out of the same stuff. It's so basic.
DP: What about the violence in your paintings?
KD: What about the violence? I am a violent person. Not physically, but that violence is in me, that rage. Those children are me, the animals are me. I am them. If you notice, these kids are not bloody or gory. You don't see dead children. You don't see any guts or blood or severed limbs. You just see action, a lot of action, like hair pulling and throttling and stomping and sitting on. And fighting. It's me. It's not me and another... It's just me. They're both me. There's this struggle; it's so private. I don't even know what it's about. (*laughter*) Does that make any sense to you?
DP: Sure.
KD: You see how mixed up it is? I don't sit down with a legal pad and plan these paintings. As long as I'm moving around in the studio, and I'm isolated and I have material there... It's just like my three-year-old assistant — this moving is very important — how it feels physically and mentally. It's painful to put yourself in that position, not knowing what's going to happen. The violence that the children are perpetrating in the paintings half of the time, if not most of the time, is funny-looking and very funny to me.
DP: And lately it's been between and among black and white girls.
KD: A black child has always been in my work. There's some other flavors in there too. But primarily I'm interested in the black and the white. There's more pain and more interest there because we Americans are profoundly interested in race. We are obsessed with race. The Van Dyke brown that I use for the black children punches up the meaning and it punches up the color. I need it for balance, just like in life. But visually — materially in the painting — I need it too. The white girls are pinky white with white dresses on white backgrounds — they don't show up.
DP: So black and white is optically better.
KD: It's optical, but I'm very aware of the implications it has for race.
DP: How does race play into *Priss Room*, your latest installation, with two black and two white mannequins cast from the same mold?
KD: My goal was to realize, in three dimensions, the archetypal child.
DP: It looks like *Priss* has jumped out of your paintings.
KD: She's not a doll. She's Shirley Temple as a psycho – pit bull.
DP: There is something very heavy-duty about her, she doesn't seem to be childish.
KD: Well, she's tough. She's got steel wool hair, thick glasses, little fists, a fierce expression, yet she's made of porcelain. Always vulnerable, very vulnerable.
DP: What about the relationship between facts and fiction, made-up stories and true stories, or art and reality?
KD: There is no fiction. Is that what you're asking me?
DP: No, I'm asking you how the facts and fiction fuse.
KD: What fiction? I don't know of any fiction.
DP: Well, your portrait paintings from the *Dingle Library* were a hodgepodge from American and British history — the entertainment and boxing worlds. You're clearly not the daughter of the Queen of England.
KD: No no. My mother is not Queen Elizabeth, my mother is Cram Dingle and she believes that she is related to Queen Elizabeth. I never said I was the daughter of Queen Elizabeth. Cram Dingle is George Washington as Queen Elizabeth as Cram Dingle, in whatever combination. That is who Cram is. Those are the archetypes of Cram's psyche.
DP: So they're facts but they're not what we usually think of as facts, cut and dry little entities. They're pretty juicy stories.
KD: Yes. In this family, we don't need to make things up. Cram Dingle always had this little hair-

cut, kind of parted in the middle and poofed out over the ears, and if you spray-painted her head white, she would have George Washington's hairdo. Anyone who knows Cram understands the portrait. If you get something else out of it, that's fine.

DP: So you think of yourself as a realist painter?

KD: No. I don't think of myself as a painter.

DP: A realist artist?

KD: I never thought about it, no.

DP: But if you're not making them up, they must be real.

KD: The problem is you cannot pin me down, yet.

DP: Do you think of yourself as a California artist?

KD: I do. I've never worked anywhere else.

DP: Do you have an all-time favorite piece?

KD: Yes. I like my portrait of *Ed Sullivan as a Young Girl*.

DP: It's got that lime sorbet background and he's wearing a red sweater and standing with his arms crossed, floating in a field, looking kind of serious and feminine?

KD: It's a true little girl. A stodgy little girl.

DP: Who looks like she's about sixty-five years old.

KD: Right. So it's a sixty-five-year-old little girl who, if she grew up, you could tell, would be as stiff as Ed Sullivan ever was. But thinking about it now, in relation to *Priss*, the porcelain mannequin, these two are very related. I hadn't thought about it before. But *Ed Sullivan as a Young Girl* has that impression, that stern, stodgy expression. Her character is in stone, there's no changing who or what she is. She also symbolizes, to me, the ringmaster of the circus of my work and everything that I'm doing — so many times people think they're at a group show when it's all me. So, pay attention and you'll see: there is a ringmaster. And Ed Sullivan, who was a host of a variety show and brought everything together on Sunday night at eight o'clock, is my ringmaster. That's me. And the ring, the circus, the show, is show business. This art, the business of art, is show business. So I've kept this painting for myself. Closely, you know, I keep it with me.

KIM DINGLE, *WILD GIRLS (GIRL WIELDING BABY)*, 1993, OIL AND CHARCOL ON LINEN, 72" X 60". COURTESY BLUM & POE

Priss is not a doll. She's Shirley Temple as a psycho - pit bull.

DP: If *Priss* reminds you of your *Portrait of Ed Sullivan as a Young Girl*, does that painting remind you of anyone in particular?

KD: Yes. Wadow Dingle. My niece, Wadow. She's brain damaged a bit. And Wadow had blonde hair, like a tumbleweed. You could see the landscape right through her hair because it was so big but thin, a big blonde tumbleweed. Sometimes she'd terrorize me and I'd hide from her in my dad's '55 Chevy. I'd slump down in the front seat and she'd walk around the car again and again and again. I would just stick my head up a little bit and the tumbleweed would go around and around.

DP: Like a shark.

KD: Yes. I couldn't see her head, just the hair. Well, Wadow didn't get enough oxygen at birth, so she was brain damaged. And to this day she's on special medication so she doesn't get mad. But Wadow got mad a lot as a kid, and this violence was in her. She'd just jackknife like a truck, flip and start bouncing off the telephone poles, zig-zagging down the street, smashing into walls, flipping out. She was always wearing really frilly lavender-type Easter Sunday dresses. (*laughter*) With this tumbleweed head and this enormously violent and volatile energy in her. She was otherwise the picture of femininity.

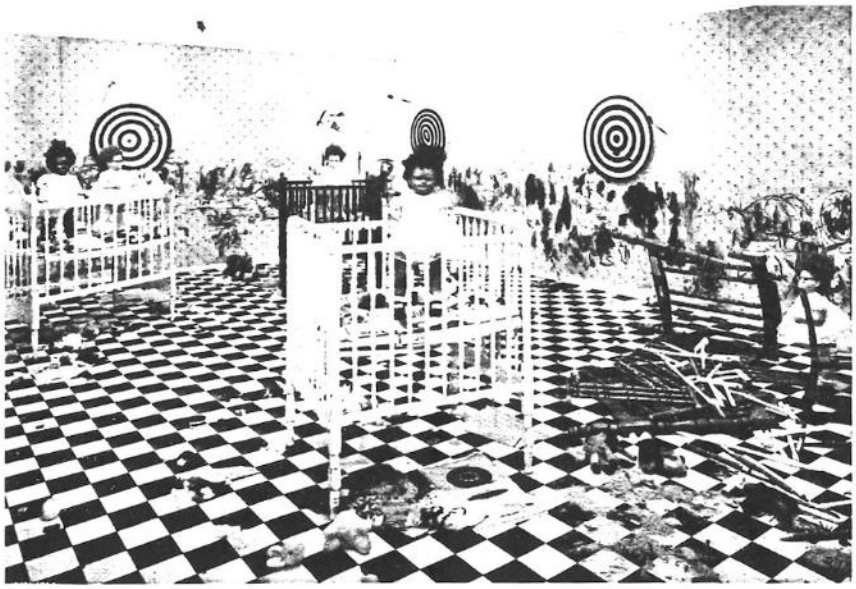
DP: So she was your first *Wild Girl*.

KD: She's the prototype. I was affected by Wadow. Wadow works for Bank of America now, opening envelopes.

DP: If you could only want one thing from art, what would it be?

KD: It's not a verbal thing. It's almost as good as what happens when an animal's lying on my chest, asleep, breathing. Or I guess a kid or a baby, but I prefer animals. The realization that we don't have any batteries or cords, and we're alive. When art does it for me, it's a direct plug-in, the actual, living experience of that reality, of being here, of being in the moment, in the direct pipeline. I don't know how it works. But I think that a painting can do that.

Darling, Michael. "Kim Dingle at Blum & Poe." *Art Issues*, March-April 1995, p. 38.



Kim Dingle

at BLUM & POE, 21 January–4 March

Kim Dingle's whirling, cyclonic installation of demonic dolls and rampant expression revolves around Western culture's ambiguous relationship with the child. Held in tension by seemingly endless sets of culturally constructed dualities, the exhibition is an exasperating and breathtaking exploration of contemporary art's chronic schizophrenia. The scene for Dingle's project is set by black-and-white checkerboard flooring and enveloping panels of wallpaper printed with cutie-pie lambs and hearts, making the space function equally as nursery, studio, and gallery. At least superficially, the viewer is presented with a traditional layout of wall-hung paintings and free-standing sculptures, but the exciting rush of evocative juxtapositions and rich associations that pour from Dingle's tableau quickly make such conventions subordinate, even suspect.

The prime mover in the installation is a renegade porcelain female doll, the size of an average toddler, bespectacled, dressed in her Sunday best, and poised for action amid her growing mess with fists clenched and a grimace that would stop a Mack truck. Unlike her nursery/studio-mates, who all share the title *Priss* (all works, 1995), this figure has escaped from her crib, broken it to bits, and gone on to fashion lethal darts from the wreckage with the help of junior-size power tools. Her equally agitated, multiracial playmates survey the mayhem from their cages, seemingly grunting with pleasure at the sight of the mutilated stuffed animals on the floor and the violently scribbled oil-stick paintings that deface the wallpaper. The walls are also riddled with wayward darts that usually miss their hand-painted targets, concentrically circular compositions that all bear the title *Dartboard*. All this destruction, viewed through the filter of art, is more aptly seen as creation, and here is where Dingle's riotous visual environment opens onto the central philosophical conundrums and clichés that have dogged art in this century.

Instead of talking her way out of philistine arguments over whether or not someone's child could have painted the marks that invigorate the wallpaper, the artist readily capitulates—for all of that exciting, uninhibited expression is done by an actual three-year-old. So much the better that the roiling patches of magenta, ochre, orange, and brown look surprisingly reminiscent of Cy Twombly: We can finally have primitivism and authenticity in one unparadoxical equation. Attribution, however, both real and imagined, becomes increasingly complex when one attempts to reconcile all the actors in Dingle's drama, from the artist's omnipotent presence as orchestrator, to her uninhibited assistant and the suspicious she-devil sculptures that welcome both the blame and the praise. The grungy scatter of eviscerated animals is also of ambiguous authorship; although credited to the unlearned aggression of a couple of pit bulls, they seem to come directly from the shenanigans of the disturbed dolls or from a patheticist predilection of the artist.

Spectators brave enough to lift up the lily white lace dresses of the dolls are surprised with body tattoos of locomotives, horses, Native Americans in battle, and (on the back of the leader of the *Priss* gang) a spiky, flowering cactus. This unconventional interaction and discovery provokes an awareness of the fine but distinct lines that separate parent from pedophile, or in a different realm, patron from philistine. Locating this contest of meaning simultaneously within the imagined context of the child's bedroom and the real context of the gallery also highlights the time-honored hypocrisy of the artist as rebel. The transgressions that Dingle stages in the white cube are the proprietary signs of art and its constant repositioning vis-à-vis historical precedent, but to give in to the artist's illusion of a ravaged domestic interior is to look for another set of rules with which to categorize the activity. The *Priss* figures, some of which bear the childhood stigma of high-powered eyeglasses, perfectly equivocate between innocent children, social misfits, and apostate artists, drawing the viewer into the still-murky boundaries between intention and instinct, art and life, creation and destruction. Dingle's provocative mess suggests that the pathetic may be less a pose than a recurring and regenerative return to the primitive.

Michael Darling is an art historian and critic living in Santa Barbara.

Kim Dingle
Installation view, 1995
Photo: Sue Tallon

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Pagel, David. "Kim Dingle." *Frieze*, March-April 1995, pp. 61-62.

Kim Dingle

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

Kim Dingle
Installation view

Walking into Kim Dingle's installation feels like stumbling upon the scene of a violent crime during a pause in the lawlessness that looks as if it's about to erupt again – only with more ferocity than it left off. Four little girl mannequins (identical except that two are black and two are white), lock their beady eyes on yours as you pause in the gallery entrance, more than a little taken aback as you try to take in the anarchic tableau unfolding before you. Dingle's hand painted porcelain figures, dolled-up in frilly white dresses, clench their little fists, lean forward defiantly and hold their lips tightly together with a stubborn, fuck-you toughness well beyond their tender two-and-a-half years. They share the same name: Priss.

Dingle's demonic progeny appear to have just trashed their well-appointed nursery. They've managed to be incredibly destructive in a refined, ladylike fashion: without dirtying their lacy dresses, scuffing their polished shoes or messing up their steel-wool hair. Scattered all over the checkerboard floor are dozens of stuffed animals that have been variously disfigured, disembowelled and dismembered by two live, no longer present pit bulls (the artist describes Priss as 'Shirley Temple as a psycho pit bull'). On the walls hang several painted targets whose luscious surfaces are pierced by heavy duty, foot-long darts. Many more of these toys-cum-weapons stick out of the wallpaper, whose pastel lamb-and-heart pattern has been obliterated by vigorous oil-stick scrawls and relentless crayon scribbles, reaching from the floor to about three feet up. This is the highest point the mannequins could reach if they stood on tiptoe and swung their arms overhead.

To make this furious, around-the-room mural, Dingle commissioned two-and-a-half year-old Annabelle Larsen Crowley to do whatever she wanted with an unlimited supply of materials she'd never be permitted to get her hands on at school. The tot's untutored smears are one part Art Brut and one part Cy Twombly. If anything can make Twombly look like a consummate draftsman, little Annabelle's ecstatic, ham-fisted gestures do. While her puerile graffiti lacks the delicacy, elegance and facility of the more famous painter's works on canvas, her spontaneous gestures more than make up for these fussy shortcomings with their raw, unselfconscious energy and intuitive sense of colour – Annabelle favours a sumptuous palette of deep ochres, rich golds and gooey browns. The juicy, varnish-saturated globs still look moist and fresh, as if they belonged to a phase when distinctions are not made between food and faeces – both substances are simply good materials for making dark, emphatic marks.

Like a 3-D freeze-frame photograph, Dingle's delightfully menacing installation seems to stop time at a particularly loaded instant: well after the violence has begun but still long before irreparable damage has been done. Standing on the floor or, as if treated as caged pets, in cribs lined with old newspapers, the Prisses embody the amoral impulses and destructive desires of children caught in the throes of the 'terrible-twos'. This is the frenzied phase when endearing infants become evil, uncontrollable tykes: wildly excited about their new powers and appetites, but totally clueless about the possible consequences of their behaviour. Free of guilt, though hardly innocent, Dingle's kids embrace mayhem and mischief because it's fun. Their haunting, wise-beyond-their-years demeanours suggest that the violence done to the walls and stuffed animals in their nursery is not nearly as traumatic as the repression that all children must live through if they're to become morally responsible adults. Dingle's installation delights and compels because, unlike many other works dealing with the loss of childhood, hers doesn't whine, point fingers or bemoan the fact that the pleasures of childhood are no longer available to grown-ups. Instead, *Priss Room* offers a tour *de force* demonstration that the irrepressible energy of little girls – at their most savage and horrible – is still alive and kicking in Dingle's vital and intelligently immature art.

David Pagel

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Pagel, David. “Mayhem, Mischief & Little Girls.” *Los Angeles Times*, 7 February 1995, pp. F1, F9.

ROBERT GAUTHIER / Los Angeles Times

MANIPULATOR: Kim Dingle's manipulated photos emphasize that modern society forces kids to grow up too quickly. Her work stands out because it's charming, dark and hilarious. **F1**

Mayhem, Mischief & Little Girls

■ **Art:** Kim Dingle's manipulated photos criticize a society that forces kids to grow up too quickly.

By DAVID PAGEL
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Mayhem and mischief have been on Los Angeles artist Kim Dingle's mind for the past few years. They've also played a big part in her work, ever since she started retouching photographs of smiling baby girls by arming them with guns, daggers and boxing gloves.

As if to give these infants a fighting chance in a ruthless world,

FAST TRACK
Up and Comers in Arts and Entertainment

■ One in a Series

Dingle's manipulated photos also emphasize that modern society forces kids to grow up too quickly. Although this sort of feminist critique has become a fashionable aspect of contemporary art, Dingle's version stands out because it's

charming, dark and hilariously funny.

Four years ago, she painted a portrait of her mother as a plump, cherubic baby whose furrowed brow, crossed eyes and clenched fists made her resemble George Foreman, the current heavyweight champ. Another lusciously painted portrait, "George Washington as Cram Dingle as Queen Elizabeth," depicted her mother as a stiff-lipped, home-grown patriarch who could not tell a lie, and as a dignified foreign queen whose regal mouth seemed to be about to break into a smirk.

Asked about the degree to which fiction enters her art, Dingle, 43, stated flatly, "There is no fiction. Cram Dingle *is* George Washington as Queen Elizabeth as Cram Dingle, in whatever order. That is who Cram Dingle is. Those are the archetypes of Cram Dingle's psyche. It's very important to her. In this family, we don't need to make up much."

Following these group portraits depicting only one sitter, Dingle began a series of "Wild Girl" paintings, in which swarming hordes of perfectly horrid little girls, decked out in frilly dresses or stark naked, pummel one another with chaotic abandon, punching, poking, biting, stabbing, shooting, choking and squashing.

In her typically matter-of-fact tone, Dingle explains, "I am a very violent person. Not physically, but the violence, the rage in my pictures is in me. All of those children are me, the ones suffering and the ones inflicting pain. I am them. If you notice, those kids are not bloody or gory. You don't see dead children. You don't see any guts or blood or severed limbs. You just see action, a lot of action."

Refreshingly free of intellectual posturing and political agendas, Dingle's work feels as if it's made from the inside out, from what she knows in her bones but can't put into words.

"I've been an artist since I was a baby. My art is about my inner life, and the pain of it. It's about the very painful process of being alive. By nature I am not an overtly political artist. I know that everything is political, that everything is politicized. But . . . I don't work at that level."

At once dumb and direct, Dingle's paintings are also animated by a quirky exuberance that suggests they're made by a true eccentric, by someone who has an uncanny knack for revealing how weird normalcy is, when you really get down to thinking about it.

"The fact that we walk around . . . and eat and breathe and have ideas and don't need any batteries or cords is just amazing to me," Dingle says. "I mean, what keeps us moving? I'm in awe of it. I'll hold my dog up and turn him around and look for the place where you put in the batteries. What makes him go? And we're made of the same stuff."

Such wacky insights reach a feverish pitch in Dingle's newest piece, a tour-de-force installation that was shown last month at Jack Tilton Gallery in New York, and is now at Blum & Poe Gallery in Santa Monica. Walking into the room, which has been totally transformed into a life-size nursery, is like stumbling into a crime-scene while the crime is still in progress.

Foot-long darts stick out of the wallpapered walls, the lowest third of which have been smeared with oil paint, greasy little handprints and crayon scrawlings. (Dingle commissioned her 2½-year-old neighbor, Annabelle Larsen Crowley, to make these furious, abstract scribbles that have none of the facile elegance of Cy Twombly's similar gestures on canvas.) Crumpled scraps of newspapers, stained diapers and dozens of ripped apart stuffed animals litter the floor.

All of this chaos seems to have been caused by four defiant, nearly demonic girl mannequins. Dressed in their Sunday finest and at the peak of the Terrible Twos, they stand with clenched fists in cribs or on the floor, staring you right in the eye as you pause in the entrance.

It is as if one of Dingle's "Wild Girl" paintings has been realized in three dimensions and you've entered it, frozen for an eerie, uncharacteristically calm moment, just before the four girls, each named (or titled) "Priss," resume their destructive frenzy.

Their ferocious demeanors suggest that the violence they have done to the nursery in which they're incarcerated is not nearly as intense as the violence that's regularly done to children as they are transformed from anarchic bundles of energy into polite and respectable citizens.

"Priss is like Shirley Temple as a psycho pit bull," says Dingle of her figures whose facial expressions are wise beyond their years. Priss is also a portrait of the artist as a stubborn child who has somehow managed to grow up without losing touch with her irrepressible—yet hardly innocent—urges.

The amoral impulses of little girls at their most horrible not only survive but are alive and kicking in Dingle's installation. "I don't feel it's necessary for me to psychoanalyze everything. I'm not in therapy, but I'm really feeling alive and real. And I like myself. I mean, I like me. And I do have fun with my art, and it's very serious."

■ *Blum & Poe, Broadway Gallery Complex, 2042 Broadway, Santa Monica, (310) 453-8311. Through March 4.*

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Schjeldahl, Peter. "Bringing Up Baby." *The Village Voice*, 15 November 1994, p. 58.

Kim Dingle: *Priss Room* (1994) with four *Prisses* (all 1994)

Bringing Up Baby

By Peter Schjeldahl

Kim Dingle
Jack Tilton Gallery
47-49 Greene Street
Through November 12

A growing girl might be ambivalent about babies, whose defenselessness excites her maternal programming and whose demandingness threatens her will to independence. Men are unlikely to understand the feeling, though one strange man, Lewis Carroll, may have nailed it. An infant rescued by Alice from a dysfunctional duchess metamorphoses into a pig, which trots away in the woods. "By the by, what became of the baby?" the Cheshire Cat asks later. "It turned into a pig," Alice answers. Remarks the Cat: "I thought it would."

Kim Dingle's delightful paintings and installations that celebrate winsomely savage babies and horrid little girls have a sneaking, Cheshire gravity. Seen in the artist's New York solo debut, the work gives a lot of immediate pleasure and, as you look, can draw you into meditating on the infantile sublime. The meditation is energized and steadied by a real, live temperament, a quality rare enough to render unimportant, at least on early acquaintance, the limitations of any artist thus endowed.

Dingle is a girl artist. A grown woman herself, working in her native Southern California, she makes art of and about girlhood, a territory of the spirit popular these days. In common with even more rife boy art, girl art responds to a felt crisis in what we call, for want of a better word, adulthood—a state widely deemed a raw deal in present society. Girl artists (including Karen Kilimnik, maybe the most powerful exponent of the genre) root around in the remembered, richly embarrassing stuff of female upbringing, seeking a new deal or, failing that, a better sense of how the cards fell as they did.

At worst, girl art involves low-cost attitudinizing that is easy to patronize—practically begging for it in the very title of last year's "Bad Girls" show at the New Museum. (One aches to explain to all self-styled naughty girls and boys that *no one gives a shit* about their precious rebellions.) Dingle naturally appeared in an L.A. installment of that show. She rides a wave of fashion, but without recourse to fashionable critiques of "social construction of consciousness" and the like. Declining the wimpy presumption of coming to society with clean hands, she plainly means to impose some consciousness-constructing of her own. (Why become an artist unless to get in on that power?) She also, and perhaps primarily, wants to paint.

Though upstaged by a deliriously entertaining installation piece, the eight paintings in Dingle's show (which closes Saturday) are the pith of the occasion. They are luxuriantly beautiful, a fact that may dawn slowly due to the clamor of their subject matter: tough babies lolling or tumbling around, often beating the crap out of each other, in shallow pictorial space adjusted to backgrounds of nursery wallpaper laid on wood panels. The wallpaper designs provide a formal armature and an air of hallucination. Remember lying in bed with a fever and seeing things in the walls?

Dingle babies don't cry. They are too busy enjoying the license of being premoral—not the same thing as innocent, as some geese that a gang of them insouciantly murder have reason to note. Held by one playmate and pounded by another, a Dingle darling takes the beating with the angry stoicism of a hard-boiled private eye. Her turn will come. Sexual hijinks are eschewed. When you think about it, almost nothing is *not* sensual for a baby, especially when the baby is made of the literally polymorphous, greasy stuff of oil paint.

Dingle's unruly sweeties behave for their own pleasure, not for the viewer's titillation. If given a chance, they would spit—or drool—in our eye. Of course, the babies' pleasure is that of the artist, projected, just as their violence may act out her girl-type ambivalence. In any case, Dingle's psychoburble wholly inhabits paint, where it becomes a legitimate cause for virtuosity. She doesn't ornament a conceit. She builds a vision stroke by steamy, buoyant stroke. The vision—with a strong tactile element, the effect of moist-looking varnished sur-

faces and a virtual sweet-sour smell of toiling baby flesh—is a fiesta of shamelessness.

Dingle might be the first to admit that being totally uninhibited is a dubious joy. She takes no pains to pretend that certain inhibitions aren't excellent ideas. She doesn't advertise savagery; she only digs it. If no anguish attends her ferally untrammeled toddlers, it's because this is art, where wishes are supposed to come true. The viewer should just not complacently identify with what Dingle uncorks. The perky malevolence of her installational tour de force, in particular, tolls for thee, too.

The piece is a full-scale nursery with four interracial (two white, two black) but otherwise identical, terrible-twos-ish girl mannequins decked out in frilly white going-to-see-granny dresses. Three stand in cribs and one on the floor. All face forward with blissfully evil expressions (recalling the lethal doll in the movie *Child's Play*) and clenched fists, as if avid to kick some butt and having butt ideal for the purpose in immediate view.

From the look of things, these creatures are rarely idle and never nice. Ripped-up stuffed animals, dog chews, and crumpled newspapers litter the linoleum floor. (Someone not inclined to more hands-on tending than is absolutely unavoidable has used newspaper to line the crib bottoms.) The rooms' little-lamb wallpaper bears a muralistic masterpiece of puerile graffiti in paint and crayon.

A gallery person told me that Dingle turned loose a live two-and-a-half-year-old girl to make the mural. Reportedly the tot completed it in two sessions, having ended the first by going to wailing pieces from exhaustion. (Isn't it always the way when you get what you want?) Many viewers entering the room spontaneously mutter, "Cy Twombly!" Twombly draws somewhat better than Dingle's collaborator, I hasten to insist, though the kid could give him color lessons. It is a tour de force's tour de force to watch a tiny genius's style evolve along the walls.

All tykes have artistic genius;

Art

one in a million recovers it later, after the moral training that, among other things, allows us to move around in public without handcuffs. Dingle makes a tacit drama of the crisis that occurs when ecstatic oneness with instinct is swapped for the troublesome blessings of free will. Dingle's form of the drama is pure art, because all its elements of grown-up discipline are aesthetic—mainly the painting conventions with which she contains herself and her brawling make-believe progeny. She says yes to painting. To other modes of civilized expectation she advises, "Duck!" ■

Young, Geoffrey. "Kim Dingle." *Lingo*, no. 3, 1994, pp. 34-35.

KIM DINGLE

Wild Girls Under Blue Sky (Hanging), 8" x 10" *Oil on linen*, 1993

Talk About Girls

Geoffrey Young

Seen steadily in one-person and group shows since 1990, including the recent "Bad Girls" shows (NY & LA), forty-three-year-old Los Angeles painter Kim Dingle's anarchic progeny —the thrash & stomp, help & hinder, hoist & throw, clamor & cling girls in their outsized Mary Jane shoes, white socks and pretty Easter dresses, these pre-teen action heroines set loose in a world without adults—are on a complex mission. This mission calls into question the subtle space between play and cruelty, between pratfall and mayhem. Her wild girls, isolated as well from boys, seem nevertheless inhabited by the same brutish needs and inclinations as are associated with the rogue element of the testosterone set. Kim Dingle is our Lady of the Flies, her girls the evidence of an experiment that proves there is no crucial difference between "sugar & spice" and "snakes, snails & puppy dog tails" . . . except the costuming.

It was in April 1993 in LA that I got my first taste of her critique. A small painting, about 8" tall by 10" wide, was lying on a table, one object among others. It was a washy golden landscape with figures, a tree, blue sky. I liked the size, restrained color, the Wegmanesque drawing in the figures dispersed in clumps near the tree.

I picked it up, as one would a book, and "read" it. Lo and behold, in my hand was a brief compendium of brutalities committed by little girls upon their own kind. To be precise, a stomping, a thrashing, a point-blank execution by rifle, and a girl hanging from a tree limb, by the

neck. As my eye scanned, my mind raced like the nightly news. The shock of recognition produced an accelerated pulse. Cruel puppeteer? Angry documentarian? Or was Dingle a wise-guy jester juggling with our genderized expectations? With attitude to burn, I loved her dark humor. I wanted to steal the painting. I felt a moment of lethal reflection: so much cruelty had never been so unobtrusively pictured, and by such unlikely protagonists. It was as if Goya had taken over Degas's mind, suddenly pitting his exhausted ballet dancers one against the other (enough hypertrophied suffering for one's art!). Put a sap in the toe of your ballet slipper, Dearie, and blindside the prima! That's why they call it "human" nature! It takes art. Another painting shows the wild girls in a brown field digging a communal grave for infants in their charge (or for the babies they were planning on not having?), even as some babies try to crawl away. Talk about funny.

Whether shadowboxing alone, or in pairs, or clamoring in groups, Dingle's wild girls are drawn with an exuberant kinetic ease. Prepubescent, racially diverse, though psychologically undifferentiated, these girls function as generic markers of the feminine, rather than as individuals. In *Girl Boxing Shadow*, a lithe dervish, immersed in concentrated glovework, is oblivious to the gaze that studies her. Armed against just this vulnerability to the male gaze, or is she? In her be-gloved girls, Dingle proposes the thought that self-determination, self-definition, can only come from the empowered, the secure self. Her guerrillas won't duck and run, neither from each other, the culture, nor from fun.

Girl Boxing Shadow, 72" x 60", *Oil on linen*, 1992

Wild Girls (ghost dog), 72" x 60", *Oil on canvass*, 1993

Having learned bits and pieces from Alex Katz's early work, Eric Fischl (embarrassment), Wegman, and Guston (Dingle piles bodies up like he piled things), as well as from the conceptual work of early Baldessari, among many other influences both folk and fancy, this artist is wrestling the idea of *girl* into new shape. She knows the fight starts early; that's why she paints boxing gloves (and black eyes) on infants. She also knows that the same power/oppression that shapes her subjects is the same power/oppression that polices and "civilizes" all groups. And furthermore, she knows that girls police girls, just as groups police themselves, just for drill.

Removed from home or school, her rough & tumble troops corroborate a Darwinian survival of the fittest. At their best, Dingle's paintings reach beyond their satiric heart to tap into lyrically fresh connections to the history of painting itself. If a dog gets stomped or an infant dropped along the way, that's life, this sapphic Jonathan Swift seems to say. Dingle may name the flaw, but she doesn't have to condemn it. Not in any hurry to grow up, still her wild girls are well on the way. But whither? Are these waifs lamented or celebrated? At what point will Dingle have to engage the political conditions that shaped them? ■

Crockett, Tobey. "Kim Dingle at Richard/Bennett and Parker Zanic." *Art in America*, July 1992, p. 116.

Kim Dingle: *Annie Oakley*, 1992, oil on reproduction, 10 by 8 inches; at Parker Zanic.

LOS ANGELES

Kim Dingle at Richard/Bennett and Parker Zanic

Kim Dingle's figures of boxers, cowboys, presidents and queens deftly conflate the domestic and the epic. History is putty in the fingers of this skillful dissimulator, who frequently uses old-fashioned baby blankets, tablecloths, wallpaper, photos and cheap art reproductions as her canvas. This past winter she presented a selection of oil paintings and objects in a two-part exhibition from the notional "Dingle Library," a pseudo-institution concerned with the imaginary history of a family the artist implicitly claims as her own. The first installment (at Richard/Bennett) consisted of portraits and "books," while the second (at Parker Zanic) was made up of "Paintings of the West with Horse Drawings by Teenage Girls."

Dingle sets up a winsome dialectic in which autobiographical and familial history is explored within the context of national myth, throwing the latter slyly into question. She recasts our shared past from a girl's-eye view, with haunting figures in Mary Janes and anklets providing the vicarious means for our reappraisals. Dingle's America is an antic and exciting place, a site of childish imaginings, but in its own way it also suggests the "simulacrum" so laboriously posited by Baudrillard and others.

George Washington as Cram Dingle as Queen Elizabeth II, included in the Richard/Bennett show, demonstrates Dingle's ability to translate the mythic into everyday scale. In her "Paintings of the West," the artist achieves a similar effect by inserting her little girl into scenes of runaway mustangs, buffalo roundups, Indians celebrating tribal rites and the sheriff maintaining law and order. Dingle's "books," meanwhile, are glass-enclosed paintings stacked on the self-explanatory *My Dust Collection as a Pedestal*, itself an object of Duchampian irony. Here we find depictions of George Washington as a girl, the *Noodlelike Boxer* and *How to Draw Human Figures Using Eggs and Sausages*. References to Duchamp, Johns, Twombly and Wegman whisper in the background here.

To give a more intimate sense of the lives of the pioneers who settled the American West, Dingle concocts bits of decorative art from the homes of her imaginary forebears. For example, she converts wallpaper with "classy" hunting scenes into ranch-hand kitsch by means of doodly drawing that adds horns to hounds and turns whips into lassos. Other wallpaper works carry the migrant girl into town or out into the desert.

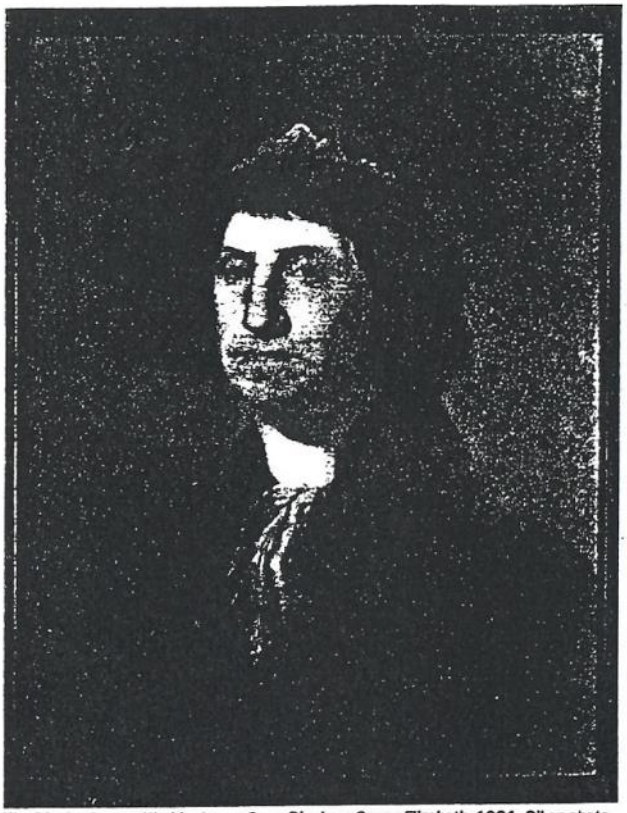
Dingle doesn't dwell on painterly technique per se, but when she does concentrate on a passage, she makes a credible go of it, bringing a Post-Impressionist handling to her depiction of dust-storms or the bushy hair that seems to run in the Dingle "family." Still, drawing seems especially important to Dingle, and perhaps that is why she included the "Horse Drawings by Teenage Girls" in the Parker Zanic show. Collected by friends from schools and old sketchbooks, these unassuming works are by turns cute, sophisticated and raw. Covering two walls, they had the effect of prehistoric cave art.

As silly and eccentric as all this sounds, Dingle never quite loses sight of the historical critique that inspires her art in the first place. The sheer abundance of her irreverent observations is, in the end, her strongest asset. Tough and literate, the works in the "Dingle Library" are well worth consulting; they operate in an elegant and thoughtful arena of meaning. —*Tobey Crockett*

Art in America

July 1992

Pagel, David. "Kim Dingle." *Arts Magazine*, December 1991, p. 2.



Kim Dingle, *George Washington as Cram Dingle as Queen Elizabeth*, 1991, Oil on photo on canvas, 11" x 14". Courtesy Richard/Bennett Gallery.

Kim Dingle

In Kim Dingle's whimsical portraits, stiff-lipped patriarchs mutate into stately matrons whose lips almost break into knowing grins but remain fixed in ambiguous smirks. If the artist's playful re-creations of history repicture the past according to standard feminist tenets and entrenched deconstructionist tactics, they also make a place for Dingle's unorthodox sense of humor. Never programmatic, formulaic, or illustrative, her masterfully crafted images do not settle for attacking the authority of tradition as much as they use its conventions and clichés as raw materials for their own idiosyncratic, even perverse, purposes. Dingle's art proposes that history's grip on the present lies less in the power of the forms and myths official culture gives us than in any individual's habitual unwillingness to make up, for the moment, stories of one's own. Profoundly democratic, and radically irreverent, her illusions capture the whim at the root of any originary action. Rather than demonstrating, once again, that originality is a myth, her paintings show that creativity is a matter of (re-)invention—that art is not about bringing something out of nothing, but about turning inherited symbols into unpredictable configurations.

Duchamp's *L.H.O.O.Q.* stands behind Dingle's exhibition. Where the father of Dada's mustachioed Mona Lisa implies that the beguiling smile of da Vinci's model relates to her sexuality, and traced them both back to masculine power, the paintings in *Portraits from the Dingle Library* similarly confound gender distinctions in their androgynous romp through national politics and familial identity. *George Washington as Cram Dingle as Queen Elizabeth* overlays the artist's family history (Cram is her ~~grand~~mother) with America's mythical father and England's regal figurehead. If Duchamp laid bare the stereotypes with which da Vinci's image played, Dingle dresses up images of Anglo respectability to suggest that America's first president was a cross-dresser and a queen, who happened to bear a striking resemblance to the artist's grandmother. Unlike Duchamp's sarcastic gesture, which debunked art history by means of analytic detachment, her conflation of painted portraits gives back to history a sense of newness and possibility. Propositional, generous, and always funny, Dingle's images never mock or deride: they cause us to laugh, but not at anyone's expense. Her version of parody is original because it does not simply reverse the terms of skewed power relations, but sidesteps their authority altogether. By documenting a fantastic reality, her art pretends to describe the imagination's ungovernable movements. In the droll, cock-eyed world created by Dingle's singular portraits of multiple personalities, originality returns as a refreshing mutation. Strangely familiar yet totally eccentric, her carefully rendered, multivalent figures more effectively disrupt expectations by almost fitting into stereotypes and conventions.

Dingle's other paintings exaggerate the play between masculinity and femininity that otherwise almost defines a miniature industry within the art world today. *Baby Cram Dingle as George Foreman* depicts a cherubic baby girl in her Sunday finest who has clenched her fists, furrowed her brow, and crossed her eyes so that she resembles the heavyweight boxing champion. In *Portrait of Ed Sullivan as a Young Girl*, the sour-faced entertainer's distinctive mug has been transferred to the body of a preteen whose sweater, posture, and overall demeanor hauntingly mirror the older man's. And *Abraham Lincoln's Legs* juxtaposes a small photograph of the president with a larger-than-life-size painting of two extremely white legs hovering in a field of varnished darkness. The almost translucent limbs fade into nothingness where the genitals and torso should be attached, but seem less like severed limbs than ghostly presences that have floated out of a dream and into Dingle's distorted world of gentle weirdness. Here, the intention is not simply to feminize masculinity, but to confound such oppositions altogether. Dingle's art never levels difference into general categories or reduces particularities to their lowest common denominator, but discovers, and accentuates, the singularity of individuals. For her, conventional categories do not restrict and delimit as much as they provide the ground from which her uncategorizable paintings begin.

(*Richard/Bennett, Los Angeles, September 6—27*) *David Pagel*

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Kandel, Susan. "Skewed Portraits." *Los Angeles Times*, 12 September 1991, p. F12.

Kim Dingle's oil "George Washington as Cram Dingle as Queen Elizabeth II" at Richard/Bennett.

Skewed Portraits: One can't help but think of Marcel Duchamp's most famous gesture—painting a thin mustache upon the Mona Lisa's pristine lips—when strolling through **Kim Dingle**'s cockeyed hall of portraits. A framed reproduction of Gilbert Stuart's George Washington comes first; in the Dingle Library incarnation, however, the father of our country sports not the familiar powdered wig, but a brown bouffant hairdo and a delicate white crown.

Like Duchamp, who thumbed his aquiline nose at Leonardo da Vinci in order to liberate himself from the tyrannies of an art historical patrilineage (only to become, ironically, the "father" of modern art), Dingle is interested here in debunking patriarchal systems—democracy, history, and even portraiture, all designed to consecrate ideas and people in perpetuity.

However, the title of the piece, "George Washington as Cram Dingle as Queen Elizabeth II," which entangles family history (Cram Dingle is the artist's mother) with national history, complicates matters. For the image thereby emerges less as a satire a la Duchamp than as a manifesto about the inextricability of the public and the private—and their equal complicity in spinning impossible myths of origin.

The portraits startle with their incongruities. "Baby Cram Dingle as George Foreman" is especially bizarre—a tiny thing in a lacy white jumper, with green blouse and little green shoes to match, bearing the boxer's distinctively puckered, narrow-eyed mug. Floating against a solid green background, feet delicately crossed at the ankles, this baby-man resembles nothing so much as a well-behaved extraterrestrial.

That this is a painting created whole-cloth by Dingle, rather than a "ready-made" partially altered by her, renders the image particularly disturbing. As such, it reads not as a prank, but as an emblem of an alternate universe—a place where private origins and public endings are strangely conterminous.

Boxing is an important symbol for Dingle, conjuring the macho ethos underlying any patriarchal system. By infantilizing Foreman (and perhaps even playing off his own self-deprecatory sense of humor), she suggests that the flip side of machismo is impotent pugilism.

In "Baby Boxer," she reinvents the strategy, painting a pair of red boxing gloves onto the antique postcard image of a cherubic baby sprawled nude on a blanket. The latter work, however, is simply too easy. Like the enormous pile of dust Dingle displays alongside it in a glass pedestal, it is amusing, but ultimately weightless.

Accompanying the library of portraits is a series of "books"—wooden planks sandwiched between glass covers and embellished with a variety of images, from a "noodle-like boxer" to two coats of the Declaration of Independence, inscribed one atop the other, turning the ponderous words into utter gibberish. While these objects are clever—books that can't be read, but can only be picked up and admired, like three-dimensional paintings—they are disjunctive in this context, and detract from an otherwise fine, taut exhibition.

■ *Richard/Bennett Gallery, 830 N. La Brea Ave., (213) 962-8006, through Sept. 27. Closed Sunday and Monday.*

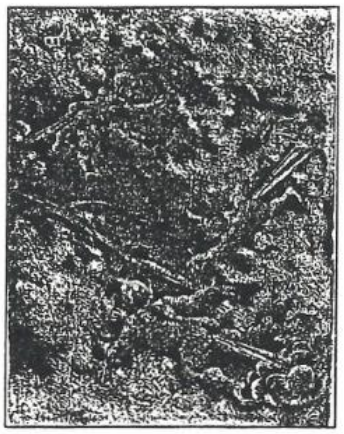
Crockett, Tobey. "Violent Femmes." *Visions*, Summer 1991, p. 34.

VIOLENT FEMMES

Boxing Girls K.O. Farting Boys in Los Angeles

By Tobey Crockett

Kim Dingle at Kim Light Gallery, Los Angeles, and Megan Williams at Roy Boyd Gallery, Santa Monica



Kim Dingle and Megan Williams are as nasty as they want to be — dishing, dissing and decking whatever cosmic foes their feisty imaginations can conjure. While Dingle figuratively knocks around racially mixed little girls and babies in her oil paintings, Williams plays against the Yucky-But-Cute School of Bad Boy Art Antics, upping the ante with her pastels, paintings, assemblies and sculptures. In their recent work both artists deal with issues of adolescence, feminism and sexuality, referring liberally to a rich variety of art-historical sources and demonstrating a distinct mastery in their handling of materials. But, although Dingle and Williams share plenty of ground for comparison, when the two contenders climb in the ring all bets are off.

In co-opting the traditional male arenas of boxing and painting, Dingle subverts notions of machismo and turns them to her own purposes. A suite of large oil paintings sprawled on linen dominate and define her newest oeuvre, depictions of girls boxing while dressed in their Sunday best. Colonizing the gallery was a veritable army of pre-pubescent amazons, a series of "Corner Girls" tweaking conventions of minimalist sculpture with its small matched canvases facing each other down in one corner of the gallery. In this visual pun, pairs of girls come out of their "corners," duking it out with one another as seriously as their maker does with the likes of, say, Serra or Morris, reclaiming the corner as territory for painting, and for irreverent females.

Dingle presents her prizefighter filles as "bad girls", socially inept and unacceptable, sent to the corner for hardcore brawling, not catfights. By imbuing these women warriors-in-training with male ferocity, Dingle allows her girls to seize an equivalent respect, simultaneously stamping Dingle herself with the imprimatur of champion. Rather than the bone-crunching realism of George Bellows, Dingle invokes the loopy cartoon violence of Chuck Jones; yet the tension in her earnest brushwork and compositions more than balances the goofiness in the idea of boxing gloves as accessories to the Mary Jane set. A pair of *Black and White Girls on Linen* pictures portray girls as they pick each other up and engage in tests of strength. These two works are very disarming, not least because of their out-of-kilter resonance with Renaissance and Baroque representations of the Descent from the Cross.

Williams is also adept at blending a wry, if bitter, irony within her swirling images of Ur-men and women, pneumatic animals and family romance. Her scope of subject matter is less concentrated than Dingle's. Venturing beyond the fray of sexual politics into broader observations of power, both personal and metaphysical, Williams cites literary themes and references, relying on both textual and visual quotation to underscore her nuances. She seems to want simultaneously to critique and to celebrate family values and role playing; but, rather than adding up to a challenging dialectic, the net results, however strong and charming, cancel themselves out.

Williams' grasp of art-historical tides is as lucid as Dingle's and even more wide-ranging, but her dependency on visual quotation tends to dull the perspicacity of her wit, lipsynching with rather than subverting the objects of her inquiry. Like Dingle, Williams offers an astute substitution of figure type within an unexpected context. Evoking the Venus of Willendorf, some bodies sport Thalidomide flipper arms and robust hindquarters. Their solidity is convincing, their stony silence unnerving, while their featurelessness and generic composition allow ready identification. Still, they serve up a whimsical repulsion with their hints of industrial accident and post-nuclear mutation.

Maintaining a headlock on cuteness, Williams' stellar cast of angelic behinds and groping hands creates a Dr.-Seuss-Meets-Rodin ambience. Often set in the clouds or in whirlpools of supernatural wonders, stretched bodies and grasping swirls of pure color galvanize the field. *Boys Farting* proffers a nudging wink of sly smuttiness with its Icarian trio crepitating propulsively, recalling William Burroughs or Jeff Koons. Similarly, *Piece of Ass Sundae* series up a surreal parfait of Fragonard fragments, spiced with a hint of cannibalism, a theme which occurs also in the Goya-esque *Untitled (Bird With Drumstick)*. The *Girl With Flowers* bends over as classically as any Degas or Renoir bather, but Borden-style blooms have been graphically imposed on her bum, reminiscent of Polke but also of Keith Boadwee's anally-fixated targets.

While Williams' work is well-crafted and intriguing, its reliance on one-liner humor or macabre renditions of the familiar only underscores the feeling that she is telling us what we already know rather than subverting the ordinary into a new and persuasive paradigm. Dingle similarly measures her girls in classic themes and iconography, but by inverting the power equations, her everygirl becomes lionized as a liberated rebel. Issues of sexuality, social structure and normalcy are important to both artists. But Dingle's Boxing Girls are understood as inherently embodying these conflicts, while Williams' humanoids must first struggle to establish their humanity before they can offer us anything new to say about our Divine comedy.■

Tobey Crockett is a writer based in Los Angeles.

Top Left: Megan Williams, *Boys Farting*, 1992, Pastel on paper, 15 x 12"
Photo: Paula Goldman
Top Right: Kim Dingle, *Black and White Girls on Linen*, 1992, Oil on linen, 72 x 60"

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KIM DINGLE
Biography

Born	Pomona, CA, 1951	
	Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA	
Education	1988	B.F.A. California State University, Los Angeles
	1990	M.F.A. Claremont Graduate School, CA

One Person Exhibitions:

1991	"The Romance and Drama of the Rubber Industry," Closet of Modern Art (COMA), California State University, Los Angeles
	"Portraits from the Dingle Library," Richard/Bennett Gallery, Los Angeles, 6 – 27 September
	"Dingle Library Presents Paintings of the West with Horse Drawings by Teenage Girls," Parker Zanic, Los Angeles
	"pre-History A Dog's Bach is Worse Than it Sounds," Double Rocking G Gallery, Los Angeles
	"Remembering Pencil," Double Rocking G Gallery, Los Angeles
1992	Kim Light Gallery, Los Angeles
1993	Jason Rubell Gallery, Miami Beach, FL (brochure)
1994	"Kim Dingle," Jack Tilton Gallery, New York, 12 November (closing date)
1995	"Kim Dingle," Blum & Poe, Santa Monica, CA, 21 January – 4 March
1995-96	"Kim Dingle," Otis Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, 18 November 1995 – 27 January 1996; The Renaissance Society at The University of Chicago, 24 November – 29 December 1996 (catalogue)
	"A Glimpse of the Norton Collection as Revealed by Kim Dingle," Santa Monica Museum of Art, CA, 9 December 1995 – 25 February 1996; SITE Santa Fe, NM (artist's project; brochure)
1997	"Kim Dingle: The Prisspapers," Blum & Poe, Santa Monica, 6 September – 11 October
1998	"Kim Dingle: Fatty," Gian Enzo Sperone, Rome, 30 September – 30 October
	"Kim Dingle: Fatty and Fudge," Sperone Westwater, New York, 7 November – 19 December (catalogue)
2000	"Kim Dingle and the Wild Girls," David Winton Bell Gallery at the List Art Center at Brown University, Providence, RI, 11 November – 31 December
	"Kim Dingle: Never in School," Sperone Westwater, New York, 2 November – 22 December
2002	"Kim Dingle," Galleria Cardi, Milan, 9 April – 31 May
2007	"Kim Dingle: Studies for the Last Supper at Fatty's," Sperone Westwater, New York, 29 March – 28 April
	"Kim Dingle: The Cake Series," Kim Light Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, 26 October – 8 December
2008	Lightbox, Los Angeles
2012	"Kim Dingle: *still lives*," Sperone Westwater, New York, 5 – 28 April 2012
2013-14	"Kim Dingle's Wine Bar for Children at Mister Ling's Market," Coagula Curatorial, Los Angeles, 26 October – 4 January
2017	"Kim Dingle: Yipes," Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Los Angeles, 14 October – 11 November
2018	"Kim Dingle," Sperone Westwater, New York, 10 January – 3 March
2019	"Kim Dingle: The Lost Supper Paintings of Fatty's," Susanne Vielmetter Projects, Los Angeles, 2 March – 13 April

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Group Exhibitions:

1990	"Con-Text," Richard/Bennett Gallery, Los Angeles
1991	"The Store Show," Richard Bennett Gallery, Los Angeles
	"Les Fleurs," Parker/Zanic Gallery and Sue Spaid Fine Art, Los Angeles
	"Synthetic Histories," Parker/Zanic Gallery, Los Angeles
1992	"Déjà vu," Asher/Faure Gallery, Los Angeles
	"I Thought California Would Be Different, New Work in the Permanent Collection," Laguna Art Museum, CA
	"Fever," Exit Art, New York
	"Space of Time," Americas Society, New York
	"The Imp of the Perverse, Eight Artists from Los Angeles," Sally Hawkins Gallery, New York
	"Group Show: Mary Beyt, Kim Dingle, David Dupuis, Scott Grodesky," Rubenstein/Diacono Gallery, New York
	"Contemporary Identities: 23 Artists. The 1993 Phoenix Triennial," Phoenix Art Museum, AZ, 21 August – 10 October (catalogue)
	Corcoran Gallery of Art Biennial, Washington, DC
1993-94	"Fourth Newport Biennial: Southern California," The Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, CA, 2 October 1993 – 30 January 1994 (catalogue)
1994	"Mapping," The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 6 October – 20 December (catalogue)
	"Bad Girls West," UCLA Wight Gallery, Los Angeles
	"Arrested Childhood," Center for Contemporary Art, Miami, 19 May – 2 July (catalogue)
1994-95	"Mapping," curated by Francis Colpitt, University of Texas at San Antonio, TX; Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, CA
1995	"Space of Time," Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami
	"Inside Out: Psychological Self Portraiture in the 90's," The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT
	"Gender, Myth and Exploration," University of North Texas, Denton, TX
	"Wallpaper Works," Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston
1995-96	"Playtime: Artists and Toys," Whitney Museum of America Art at Champion, Stamford, CT, 15 December 1995 – 20 March 1996 (catalogue)
1996	"Narcissism: Artists Reflect Themselves," California Center for the Arts Museum, Escondido, CA
	"American Kaleidoscope," National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC (catalogue)
	"Early Learning," Entwistle, London
	"Between Reality and Abstraction: California Art at the End of the Century," Scottsdale Center for the Arts, Scottsdale, AZ, 28 June – 1 September
1997	"My Little Pretty: Images of Girls by Contemporary Women Artists," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (catalogue)
	"Women's Work: Examining the Feminine in Contemporary Painting," Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, NC, 19 July – 30 September (brochure)
1997-98	"Sunshine and Noir: Art in L. A., 1960-1997," Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark, 16 May – 7 September 1997; Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, 15 November 1997 – 2 January 1998; Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Spring 1998; UCLA at the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center, Los Angeles, Fall 1998 (catalogue)
1998	"Family Viewing," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
	"Presumed Innocence," Anderson Gallery, School of the Arts, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, 17 January – 1 March; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH, 4 April – 14 June (catalogue)
1999	"Looking at Ourselves: Works by Women Artists from the Logan Collection," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 9 January – 20 April (catalogue)
	"I'm the Boss of Myself", Sara Meltzer's on View, New York, 5 May – 12 June

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1999-02	"Almost Warm and Fuzzy; Childhood and Contemporary Art," curated by Susan Talbott and Lea Rosson DeLong, Des Moines Art Center, Iowa, 12 September – 21 November 1999; Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, 23 April – 2 July 2000; Tacoma Art Museum, Tacoma, 8 July – 17 September 2000; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, 6 October 2000 – 14 January 2001; P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, NY, 4 February – 8 April 2001; Fundació "la Caixa," Barcelona, 26 April – 8 July 2001; Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, 30 August – 4 November 2001; Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Canada, 24 November 2001 – 20 January 2002; Cleveland Center for the Contemporary Art, Cleveland, 6 September – 10 November 2002 (catalogue)
2000	"Whitney Biennial," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 23 March – June (catalogue)
	"Arte Americana; Ultimo Decennio," Museo d'Arte della Citta di Ravenna, Ravenna, 8 April – 25 June (catalogue)
	"The End," Exit Art, New York, 29 January – 29 April
	"Emotional Rescue," The Contemporary Art Project Collection, Center on Contemporary Art, Seattle, WA, 28 September – 28 October
2000-01	"Made in California: Art, Image and Identity, 1900-2000," Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 22 October 2000 – 25 February 2001
	"The Darker Side of Playland: Childhood Imagery from the Logan Collection," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1 September 2000 – 2 January 2001 (catalogue)
	"Uncomfortable Beauty," Jack Tilton/Anna Kustera, New York, 8 December 2000 – 13 January 2001
2001	"Pop & Post-Pop (On Paper)," Texas Gallery, Houston, 23 January – 3 March
2001-02	"Lateral Thinking, Art of the 1990's," Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, 15 September 2001 – 8 January 2002 (catalogue)
2002-03	"SAM Collects: Contemporary Art Project," San Diego Art Museum, San Diego, CA, 20 December 2002 – 6 April 2003
2003	"Whiteness, A Wayward Construction," Laguna Art Museum, Laguna, CA, 22 March – 6 July
	"25 Years of Collecting Modern and Contemporary Art," Denver Art Museum, 11 March 2002 – 3 August
2005	"Light $Opt_{(s)}$: A Selection," Lightbox, Los Angeles, CA, 10 December – 23 December
2008-10	"Focus: The Figure," The Denver Art Museum, Denver, September 2008 – February 2010
2009-11	"Freeing the Figure," Seattle Art Museum, 5 November 2009 – 3 July 2011
2010	"Shrew'd: The Smart and Sassy Survey of American Women Artists," Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, NE, 12 February – 9 May
	"The Library of Babel / In and Out of Place," 176 / Zabludowicz Collection, London, 25 February – 9 May
2011	"Goldmine. Contemporary Works from the Collection of Sirje and Michael Gold," University Art Museum California State University, Long Beach, CA, 5 February – 10 April
2012-13	"Untitled (Giotto's O)," Sperone Westwater, Lugano, 30 November 2012 – 15 February 2013
2014	"Secrets and Lies," Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, 14 March – 22 June
2014-15	"The Avant-Garde Collection," Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA, 6 September 2014 – 4 January 2015
	"Il corpo figurato: Artworks from the Collection, 1966-2005," Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, 12 October 2014 – 31 January 2015
2015	"NOURISH," Napa Valley Museum, Yountville, CA, 19 September – 29 November
2018	"Shift: Karen Carson, Kim Dingle, Iva Gueorguieva, Elisa Johns," Denk Gallery, Los Angeles, 20 January – 17 February
	"Recelebration," Luckman Fine Arts Complex at Cal State LA, Los Angeles, 25 August – 10 November
	"ADACHIDINGLE FESTIVAL: An Exquisite Corpse Project," LA ARTCORE Union Center for the Arts, Los Angeles, 1 – 18 November

2019 "Coordinates: Maps and Art Exploring Shared Terrain," David Rumsey Map Center at Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, CA, 25 April – 30 September

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1996

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Selected Collections:

Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy
Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO
Denver Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, CO
Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles
Michael O. and Sirje Helder Gold
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Norton Family Foundation, Santa Monica, CA
Oak Brook Bank, Oak Brook, IL
Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA
Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, FL
Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, CA
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Seattle Museum of Contemporary Art, Seattle, WA
Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, NE
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.
Toys R Us, Paramus, NJ
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York