

ART AND CAKE

9 November 2017
by Jody Zellen



Kim Dingle, *YIPES*
Susanne Vielmetter, Los Angeles Projects

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.

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.

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.