

Kim Dingle lets her alter ego loose, and the result is a rip-roaring ride

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.



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

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.

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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.



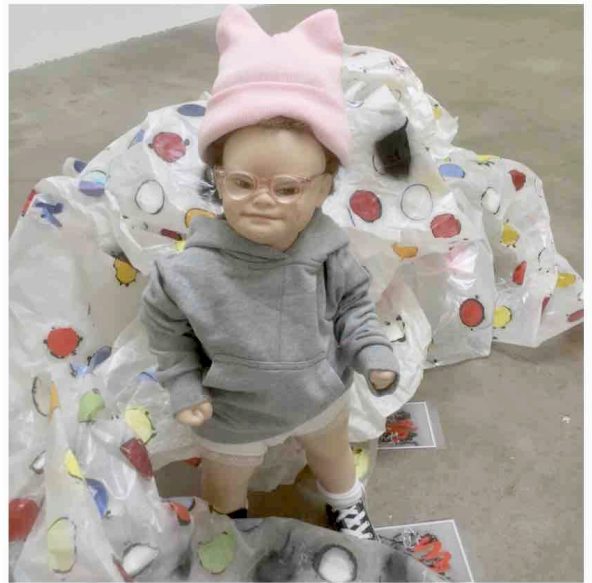
Kim Dingle's "The Afterthought," 1994 and 2017, porcelain, steel wool, China paint, fabric, debris, glassine, linen and wood, dimensions variable. Part of the "Yipes" exhibition. (Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects)

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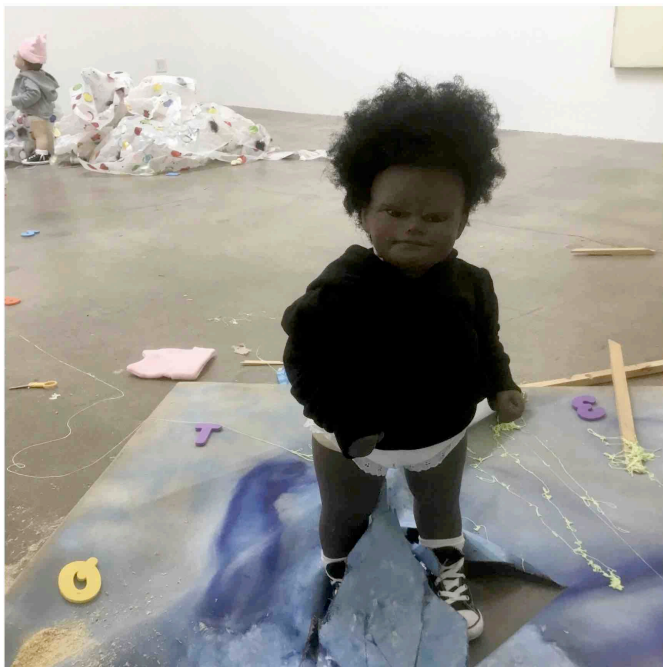
In the fourth gallery, Priss and her sidekick take 3D form. Like knee-high hurricanes, each porcelain doll — with steel-wool hair — appears to be in the middle of a temper tantrum, her destructive energy vented on trashed paintings, ripped drawings and spray painted walls.

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.



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



Kim Dingle, "The Afterthought," 1994 and 2017, detail, porcelain, steel wool, China paint, fabric, debris, glassine, oil, linen and wood, dimensions variable, "Yipes" exhibition, (Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects)