

Art in America

REVIEW OF EXHIBITIONS



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 overflow-

ing 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

Carrie Moyer at Canada

A feminist revival currently permeating the U.S. art world was well served by the 10 paintings

on view (all 2006) in Carrie Moyer's recent show. Populated by fertility-goddess-type figures and forms resembling anthropomorphic pottery with feminine contours, the works are neat and concise yet fluid, executed in pours and stains. Moyer leaves plenty of bare canvas; her longstanding interest in political graphics gives a purposeful clarity to even her most curvilinear, porous forms, situated legibly in open grounds. Her palette is subdued, earth tones or grays and whites interrupted occasionally by patches of glitter and hotter hues—sometimes a slightly crusty or drizzled red that in the context conjures menstrual blood.

The smaller paintings have a single figure at the center resembling a musical instrument or some kind of fanciful pot with dainty appendages: the lyrelike *Gimcrack*; *Fur Below*, a white modernist vase with rosy-ripped breasts; or the funny, two-legged, headless *Old Flame*, heated at its crotch by blue-hot fire. Five vessels are choreographed into a frieze in the larger *Vitrine*. They lift off from orange at their bases to white at their tops, with open, tapering brown bodies and a graceful torsion. In the one "landscape" in the show, *Coulee*, stacked curving forms might be rounded hills or geological striations, or perhaps a pair of naked bodies lying side by side (the last two paintings are both 40 by 60 inches).

The main figure in *The Stone Age* (60 by 84 inches) looks as though she is wearing a warrior

headdress, something vaguely Mediterranean—or perhaps Amazonian—in feel. Behind her, three white pours become dancing attendants. Though one may speak of a foreground and background, this painting has a strikingly shallow space, as is usual in Moyer's paintings; figures morph into ground and vice versa in what feels like a long, continuous movement transpiring purely on the surface, never in depth. At her best, Moyer engages the entire picture plane, activating figure and ground and confusing emptiness and plenitude.

The more abstract works—*Pendulum*, with its centralized, labial form, and *Medium*, tipped off the vertical and spreading bilaterally from a spine—hark back to Judy Chicago's "Through the Flower" typology, or perhaps more directly to the late Tee Corinne's notorious *Cunt Coloring Book* of 1975 (on view in the current "WACK!" exhibition at MOCA in Los Angeles and still in print). Moyer goes a step further into that generation removed: her pours hint at those of Lynda Benglis, but are way thinner; and, in the design vein, her mottled colors look like tie-dye overlapping the matte, sharply silhouetted shapes of Marimekko fabrics. Her stains feel something like Color Field and her sinuous forms like the pots that proliferated in the days of craft-enamored earth mothers. Second-wave feminism was peaking when Moyer was being raised by hippie parents on communes in the Northwest. She propels us back with a remarkably intuitive knack for tapping the visuals of a whole era.

—Faye Hirsch

Carrie Moyer: *The Stone Age*, 2006, acrylic and glitter on canvas, 60 by 84 inches; at Canada.

