



CRITICS' PICKS NEW YORK

Leelee Kimmel

The Journal Gallery

Tennis Elbow at The Journal Gallery | 45 White Street

January 18, 2018 - February 18, 2018

By David Rimanelli ↻

Leelee Kimmel, *Little Screaming Rig*, 2017, acrylic on canvas, 43 x 35".

SHARE



Leelee Kimmel's paintings aren't specifically referential, though there are references to be had: from Miró and Masson to Twombly, Basquiat, Jonathan Lasker. And there's a strange connection to Philip Guston, too—Kimmel's abstractions have Guston's nervous line recrudescences; think of the textures of his forlorn shoes. Kimmel deals in a kind of electrocuted biomorphism that's descended from Surrealism, but the life's been polluted by the morph: incandescent amoebas, skittering deep-sea/outer-space/inner-voyage paramecia, flagella, the world of Ernst Haeckel pumped up with unreal colors. Even the pastels are harsh, bright.

A sort of Habsburg-chinned specter in *Little Screaming Rig* (all works cited, 2017), radiant in red against the black ground, veers more toward figuration than most of Kimmel's paintings, even without benefit of the title. The composition moves in and out of representation, in and out of focus; acrylic paint dribbles luxuriously. Though modest in size compared to several of her other paintings, such as *Ice* and *Soft Spot* (very large pieces that feel like late Pollock shot through with Tanguy), it is a standout nonetheless. The method of paint application suggests the confectioner; jets of color mimic frosting. Yet there's a trace of poison—it's a nuclear Betty Crocker bake-off.

Kimmel reframes the ongoing question of abstraction as a severely controlled discipline—the art is abstract so it has to be *extra* tough formally, you know—and the regressive and infantile pleasures in just letting go . . . *just*. But such regression should never be underestimated; it is a generative and profound force. Kimmel's paintings traffic in mess and spillage, and there is more than a hint of the nursery room. It's all very antic and a little bit scary, this loud Kimmel world.

Artforum Inbox

Register to receive our full menu of newsletters—*From the Archive, Must See, Video, In Print, Dispatch, and ArtforumEDU*—as well as special offers from Artforum.

SIGN UP →

PMC

MOST POPULAR

VARIETY

1. Matt Damon Says Netflix Wants Movies to Restate the 'Plot Three or Four Times in the Dialogue'...

Hollywood

2. Billie Eilish Speaks Out: "We're Seeing Our Neighbors Being Kidnapped, Peaceful Protestors..."

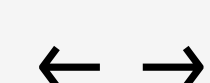
RollingStone

3. Apollonia Says Prince 'Would Be Appalled' by Estate Effort to Control Her Name

billboard

4. HUNTR/X's 'How It's Done,' the New Radio Single From 'KPop Demon Hunters,' Debuts on Pop Airpla...

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE

**RollingStone**

Is 'Sinners' a Western, Crime Thriller, Southern Gothic, or Monster Movie? Yes

VARIETY

David Ellison Isn't Giving Up Warner Bros. Quest: Paramount Skydance Extends Deadline fo...

billboard

Carín León es diagnosticado con dengue, pospone conciertos en la Feria de León

SUBSCRIBE

SUBSCRIBE

ARCHIVE

CUSTOMER SERVICE

ARTFORUM

About Us

Contact Us

Accessibility

Advertising

PMC

LEGAL

Terms & Conditions

Privacy Policy

EU Privacy Preferences

Ad Choices

FOLLOW US

Facebook

Instagram

X

YouTube

NEWSLETTERS

Enter your email address

SIGN UP >

By providing your information, you agree to our [Terms of Use](#) and our [Privacy Policy](#). We use vendors that may also process your information to help provide our services.