



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