

Review: Annie Lapin's 'Various Peep Shows' a whirlwind of imagination

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Annie Lapin's "That Looks In and Out," 2013, oil and acrylic enamel spray paint on canvas, 82-by-78 inches. (From Annie

In her third solo show in Los Angeles, titled “Various Peep Shows,” Annie Lapin continues to dip into styles and schools of painting from faraway places and far-off times.

This time around, she leaves European Expressionism behind and samples Japanese scroll painting, bringing its diaphanous landscapes and atmospheric loveliness into grubby contact with concoctions so preposterous they could only come out of California: designer graffiti, faux-collage-work and indoor landscapes.

Making a virtue of kookiness, each of Lapin’s eight paintings takes you on a whirlwind tour of an overactive imagination.

Her two biggest canvases (at approximately 7-by-6½ feet) neither hold together as coherent compositions nor splinter into fragments. Each is a carefully orchestrated train wreck of a painting in which bucolic gardens, derelict buildings and oozing gobs of paint occupy the same plane but do everything they can to keep to themselves. Think of an elevator full of people at a high-end law firm and you’ll get a sense of the buttoned-down atmosphere of Lapin’s big paintings.

The rest of her works are more free-form, fun loving, rambunctious.

Three tall skinny ones are playfully elevating, their scroll-style setup the perfect backdrop for their renegade bouquets and puffy dollops of color.

A pair of midsize pictures has the presence of inside-out landscapes, impossible territories occupied by a slew of shape-shifting forms. And the smallest painting, “Little Itty,” is anything but cute, its swiftly rendered figures too lost in the moment to worry about appearances.

As a group, Lapin’s paintings play well with one another, their spunky gregariousness trumping the desire to keep it cool.