

ART IN REVIEW

Lisa Yuskavage

Marianne Boesky Gallery
51 Greene Street, SoHo
Through Oct. 10

Lisa Yuskavage's paintings of child-women with the button-nosed faces of Keane waifs and the pneumatic bodies of sex toys have always been attention grabbers. They are in this show, which includes some of the artist's best work so far.

She's simplified most of the com-

positions to a single figure set against uncomplicated ground. The bodies have grown increasingly abstract, as if they were in flux: nipples turn into little spheres and drift off; limbs seem to be made of a glutinous substance that hasn't quite gelled. Narrative is reduced to a minimum, and the atmosphere has a sad, romantic tinge. In "Honeymoon," a lonely young woman in a peignoir gazes wistfully out at a mountain landscape; the tethered, deformed figure in "Now You Can Dance" is bathed in beatific Georges de la Tour light.

The results have provoked a lot of heat, pro and con, and it's easy to see why. Ms. Yuskavage's work is part of a bimbos-are-back trend in art (John Currin and Vanessa Beecroft, in different ways, fit in here), which plays with feminine stereotypes but is careful to keep its critical attitudes, if any, mute. Her figures are at once confections and victims, self-knowing and clueless, sexually ripe and saddled with flesh they don't know what to do with. Like the pouty, stacked starlets of yesteryear, they're great to look at and their opacity is their best feature.

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