

Review
LA TIMES March 21st, 2015

'And There Is an End' -- but no end to its goofy appeal

By David Pagel

“And There Is an End” is ahead of time — three times over.

At Roberts & Tilton, the 16-artist exhibition fast-forwards a few months: More like a summer group show than a mid-spring offering, its diverse works are loosely linked rather than nailed down into tight groups.

Its casually apocalyptic title also suggests purpose, linking that end to another one: the desire to be done with the idea that art is a coldly speculative endeavor defined by professionals — financial and otherwise.

Hands-on dabbling, intimate exploration, fearless amateurism and goofy gambits are wholeheartedly embraced. This makes for a seriously ragged group of DIY experiments whose rough-edged messiness and psychological dissonance stand out from the soulless stuff so often served up by the little darlings of the auction houses.

Standouts include loopy still lifes by Daniel Rios Rodriguez, Max Jansons and Emily Sudd. Matt Lifson and Nathan Kitch turn the surfaces of their intensely different works into springboards for the imagination, where just about anything goes.

Lumpy paint-by-numbers figuration takes shape — and looks great — in potent pictures by Alex Chaves, Derek Fordjour, Leon Benn, Henry Taylor and Keith Boadwee, who collaborates with a band of jolly misfits known as Paint Club.

Most of the works are paintings and most are figurative. But abstraction springs up in the cracks betwixt pictures — often as pattern. There is even furniture (by Chris Johanson and Johanna Jackson), flowerpots (by Roger Herman), candleholders (by Michael Dopp and Kelly Akashi) and sculptures that hang from the ceiling (by Evan Nesbit).

Nothing looks cranked out. Nothing feels formulaic. Not a squeaky clean surface is to be seen among the mix-and-match mélange of large-and-small objects.

Even more refreshing, none of the works is the visual equivalent of a sound byte. The prevailing ethos is devil-may-care recklessness mixed with just a bit of nothing-to-lose abandon. The overall attitude is user-friendly generosity. Optimism abounds, leaving visitors with a real sense of freedom.

Roberts & Tilton, 5801 Washington Blvd., (323) 549-0223, through April 18. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.robertsandtilton.com