

Ad Minoliti at Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles

By **Shana Nys Dambrot**



G. S. F. C. 2.0 (Geometrical Sci-Fi Cyborg), 2017 (installation view). Photo: Jeff McLane. Courtesy the artist and Cherry and Martin, Los An...

The thing about cyborgs, as a combination of the organic and the mechanical, is that their existence does not so much blur boundaries as render the very premise of boundaries obsolete. For artist Ad Minoliti, the allegorical potential of the cyborg's non-binary formulation presents an intersectional concept (beginning with combined human/machine consciousness, manifesting in analogue and digital techniques, and referencing gender theory), as well as a broader working method she employs in her combination of, for example, both analogue and digital techniques within single canvases. By installing painting, sculpture and video works within site-specific mural elements, she overtly and dynamically undermines the dominance of the discrete, rarefied object, instead privileging a more fractured experience rather than a smooth experiential continuum within the exhibition space. The elements of the murals are combinations of brightly coloured, stylised geometrical and anatomical forms – arms, legs, circles, triangles and the occasional feline. Augmenting the room, the wall paintings contribute imagery of human legs to paintings, or create large-scale crotches in which the canvases nestle, or playground scale motifs (swings, slides, climbing elements) on which the paintings seem to perch. These motifs in turn appear as elements of her paintings, which unto themselves represent an even deeper dive into the allegorical potential of materials and processes, as well as a more representational articulation through direct mediation of the image content.

The artist's extensive invocation of cyborgs, hybrid consciousness, gender theory and geometry could conjure a stark aesthetic, or at least a tone of gravitas. In fact, Minoliti is playing this game with light-hearted, colourful exuberance. Sky blue, rosy crimson and radiant lime are the key hues of the installation, and the shapes are rendered in a somewhat naive mode that evokes Matisse's cutouts, his dancers and stars, in both form and palette. The paintings themselves are made with a

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deliberately hybrid process in which they are painted, photographed, scanned, reprinted on canvas, then augmented by hand-painting, which often entails the addition of more schematic geometrical elements that both amplify and obscure the initial composition. And about those initial compositions: many reference a childlike fantasy world of surreal quasi-natural landscapes and abstract flourishes. The more successful examples are from her Case Study House series (2015), in which she builds upon the foundations of iconic Julius Shulman architectural photographs, replacing the leisure ladies of the originals with more fully-modelled versions of her geometrical lexicon – the triangles, circles, and squares which populate both the wall and the canvas. In these works the contrast between pictorial naturalism and the constructs of surreality plays out with more visual and optical drama, and draws more attention to her mediations, as well as to the specificity of her conceptual narrative – by forcing diverse processes, material idioms and styles into closer proximity.

One part of the installation expands Minoliti's core mission of intersectional fusion into the realm of video, sculpture, and importantly, collaboration. She often invites other women artists to participate in the art, in this case, Zadie Xa and Yaoska Davila. Davila's Picasso Asshole (2017), appears as a vignette in which two of Minoliti's paintings recline on fancy fringed tuffet cushions and watch a video loop featuring Xa. The mutual reflection between the artists's works can be enjoyed and understood as expressing their relationship to art history, gender politics and refined activism. The setup of both works is also pretty funny . And indeed humour is a mainstay of this exhibition, in which random chickens, emoji-like cartoon elements and high level discourse collide in a playground of upended paradigms.

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