

Johanna Fateman, *Alexandra Noel*, The New Yorker, November 8, 2019

ART

ALEXANDRA NOEL

By Johanna Fateman

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The only unifying principle in this Los Angeles artist's paintings is size: they're all small, some a mere three by four inches. There is otherwise no easily discernible through line of subject matter or style. "XX" appears to depict, with sombre fairy-tale realism, a beleaguered princess, thrown to the ground; "Eep" features a cloudy sky, but Noel disrupts painterly illusion with a spiral of red finger-paint dots. Several works suggest closely cropped views of photographs (including one of a newborn, wearing a heart monitor); in others, the artist shows her surrealist side in carefully modelled alien structures and blobs. But it's Noel's humble assemblages, made of pastel-hued wooden blocks and dowels, that seem the oddest, if not the wildest, of the wild cards on view in this vexing, captivating show. (*Derosia; Through Dec. 15.*)