

---

## Art in Review

### Kim Dorland

Super! Natural!

*Freight and Volume Gallery  
542 West 24th Street, Chelsea  
Through Thursday*

In the landscapes in Kim Dorland's second New York gallery show, both painting and nature are defiled, but bright, electric color keeps things from getting too ugly. Like many painters today, Mr. Dorland operates in the gap between legible imagery and paint's luscious, even oppressive materiality. His exaggeration of the medium has precedents in the work of artists as diverse as Eugene Leroy, Leon Kossoff and Joe Zucker.

Although smoothness is not absent from these works, paint is mostly slathered on and built up into relieflike surfaces, especially with pine trees. There are sometimes additions of fake fur or butterfly decals.

The human disregard for wilderness is often apparent. "The Clearing," "RIP Tom Thomson" and "Go Home" all depict groves of birch trees that seem to have been ritually stripped of their

branches and carved with skulls and obscenities or pinned with cutout pictures of nude women (or both). Flowers go unmolested, often in the form of lila-like sprigs rendered in daubs of paint that resemble foam packaging peanuts stuck on the surface.

In "Super! Natural!" a lexicon of wild animals gathers warily by a mountain lake, among scattered beer bottles. Perhaps they have come for a photo op, out of some kind of unnatural desperation; maybe their images have been culled from assorted calendars. A fifth large canvas depicts Sasquatch holding a dead gray hare; his own coat is an unnatural slurring of deep red, hot pink and fluorescent orange, which makes him an easy target, if he is not already torn and bleeding.

Like his use of color, Mr. Dorland's paint handling often has a surprising delicacy and control. It offsets the mindless, overwrought machismo that his work both exudes and parodies.

ROBERTA SMITH