

# Los Angeles Times



*Photo: "Topsy Turvy Times of Cockamamie Mumbo-Jumbo." Credit: Rob and Christian Clayton*

## Art review: Rob and Christian Clayton at Patrick Painter

July 31, 2009 | 4:30 pm

New paintings by Rob and Christian Clayton transform the traditional, tabletop still life of fruit the same way a regular cherry is turned into a maraschino: All the natural juice and color are sucked out and replaced by overly sweet synthetics. Graduates of Art Center College of Design and members of the faculty there, the Clayton Brothers giddily flex the steroid-pumped muscle of sensory excess.

Their work, spread between Patrick Painter's two Bergamot Station spaces, is fueled by manic energy and abides by the principles of spectacle — exaggeration of scale, color, intensity and movement.

Much of the work's humor is intentional (one image of a man whose head is encased in a giant blueberry is titled "Anti-Accidents"), but with all of its exuberant extremity and unabashed pastiche, it spills well over into ridiculous kitsch.

The brothers lift from Lari Pittman, Alex Grey and the whole lowbrow, beautiful loser street aesthetic. Like faux-visionary rebuses, the paintings use short-cut graphic devices (directional dashes and rays) to jerk the eye from gargantuan strawberries with facial features to bruised bananas, draped overhead like Dalí-coiffed tresses. Fruits fly and explode; a rainbow of snow-cone colors buzzes and shrieks. Faces within these scenes of hallucinogenic mayhem stare with extra-wide-open mandala-patterned eyes.

The title of one particularly chaotic image with animate plums and bananas and a single hairy leg in a brace sums it up.

The Clayton Brothers' new work amounts to a spritz of "Reddi-wip Laughter" — highly processed, fake and frothy.

-- Leah Ollman

**Patrick Painter Inc.**, Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica, (310) 264-5988, through Aug. 29. Closed Sundays and Mondays. [www.patrickpainter.com](http://www.patrickpainter.com)