

As Frieze Los Angeles Opens, Three Young California Artists Are Reinventing What Figurative Painting Can Be

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"For me, the figure is the center of what you can express. It reveals everything," says Katja Seib, 29. *D'Amour*, 2017.

Photo: Katja Seib. *D'Amour*, 2017. Oil on hessian, 83" x 71". Copyright © Katja Seib, courtesy of Sadie Coles HQ, London. Photograph: Robert Glowacki.

“Los Angeles gives me so much. There’s so much to find in this big city—and so much to lose. Nothing has inspired me like the crazy, crazy patterns and textiles they sell in L.A.’s fashion district, and the Hispanic people who live there. I still have my studio near Düsseldorf, but I wanted to escape Europe. As a painter, if you don’t want to end up in London or Paris, you go to the U.S., where you basically have two choices—New York or Los Angeles. I decided against New York and for L.A. because you have so many young galleries in L.A., and I felt more comfortable with the idea of becoming part of a new art scene, where you have more opportunities to create something.



“I felt more comfortable with the idea of becoming part of a new art scene,” says Seib. *Girls*, 2017.

Photo: Katja Seib. *Girls*, 2017. Oil on hessian, 71" x 67". Copyright © Katja Seib, courtesy of Sadie Coles HQ, London. The Theatre of the Self, Uziyel London Home Gallery, ARTUNER. Photograph © Damian Griffiths.

“For me, the figure is the center of what you can express. It reveals everything, and it’s the best way for me to depict emotions, empathy, moodiness. And you can turn it around: If the subject is smiling and everything else in the picture is dark, what does that mean? The figures I paint are from photos I’ve taken with my phone. I know many of them, but not all of them. I change the faces and the hair to make them fictional.”