

Something Sticky This Way Comes: Allison Schulnik's Haunting Exhibition

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Looking at an Allison Schulnik painting gives the feeling of being a child at bedtime, when the lights go out, and the shadows begin to cast chilling shapes on the stuffed animals. Schulnik's subject matter— kittens, flowers and clowns— has the potential to be sweet. But in their painted manifestations, with gobs of paint applied like so much frosting, her creatures morph into their tortured, carnivalesque counterparts.



Schulnik's images, whether sculpted, painted or sculpted out of paint, appear as if at war with the materials that made them. Rather than being rendered in the medium of paint, the characters seem to be caught in it, desperate to escape and starting to decompose. Some shriek in pain while others rescind into a melancholy trance as they melt into their media.

Schulnik becomes the ring master of a cast of miscreants, gathered from the underbellies of dark streets and childhood nightmares. Her macabre works evoke a strange, human compassion from the viewer; her mesmerizingly beautiful ugly ducklings will haunt you long after you leave the gallery.

Her upcoming exhibition incorporates a new medium, film:

"The centerpiece of the show is the new film *MOUND*, a vast celebration of the moving painting. It is a macabre wandering with subjects choreographed in emotive gesture and movement. The line is blurred between the material elements of art-making (texture, color, form) and the physicality of ballet and theater. Created solely by the artist and featuring over 100 hand-sculpted and sewn puppets, the labor-intensive piece took nearly eight months, at times requiring 2 hours to create a single frame."

Allison Schulnik will show at ZieherSmith until December 17, 2011.