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Los Angeles Times

David Pagel, "Painters Simone Kennedy-Doig and Antonia Showering capture the pastoral dreams and urban realities of young Londoners", Los Angeles Times (September 11, 2018), online [ill.]

Painters Simone Kennedy-Doig and Antonia Showering capture the pastoral dreams and urban realities of young Londoners



Simone Kennedy-Doig, "The Ladies Room," 2018, oil and distemper on linen, 80-3/4 x 94-1/2 inches. (Courtesy of the artist and Baert Gallery, Los Angeles)

The paintings by London-based artists Simone Kennedy-Doig (b. 1994) and Antonia Showering (b. 1991) don't look anything like one another. But at Baert Gallery in downtown Los Angeles, their pairing makes for a quietly insightful exhibition that rewards visitors who look beyond the obvious. Organized by guest curator Louis Blanc-Francard, also from London, its thoughtfulness is infectious.

Kennedy-Doig uses saturated colors and blocky shapes to bring viewers into her East London neighborhood, where many immigrants from Trinidad live. Like urban communities everywhere, elements unique to the place (local bars, clothes and automobiles) appear alongside generic features (fast-food chains, crowded streets and public toilets).

Young women trying to find their place in the mix is Kennedy-Doig's big subject. And she handles it masterfully, painting friends and strangers engaged in everyday activities as they search for epiphanies amid the confusion. Her nearly life-size figures appear to pop from the picture plane.



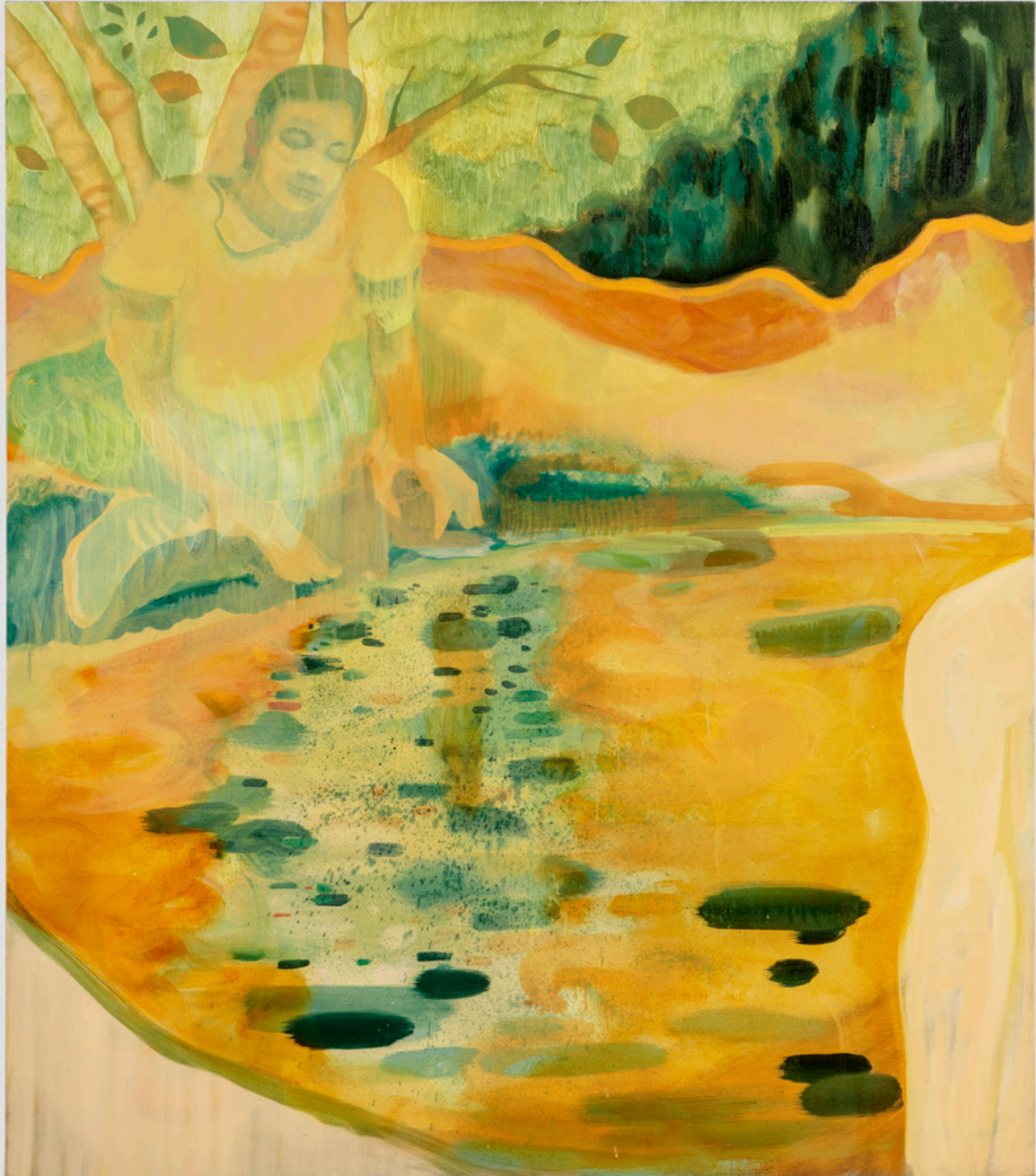
Simone Kennedy-Doig, "Under the Golden Arches (City Road)," 2018, oil on linen, 59-1/8 x 78-3/4 inches. (Courtesy of the artist and Baert Gallery, Los Angeles.)



Simone Kennedy-Doig, "Untitled (Eva)," 2018, oil on linen, 31-1/2 x 22-5/8 inches. (Courtesy of the artist and Baert Gallery, Los Angeles.)

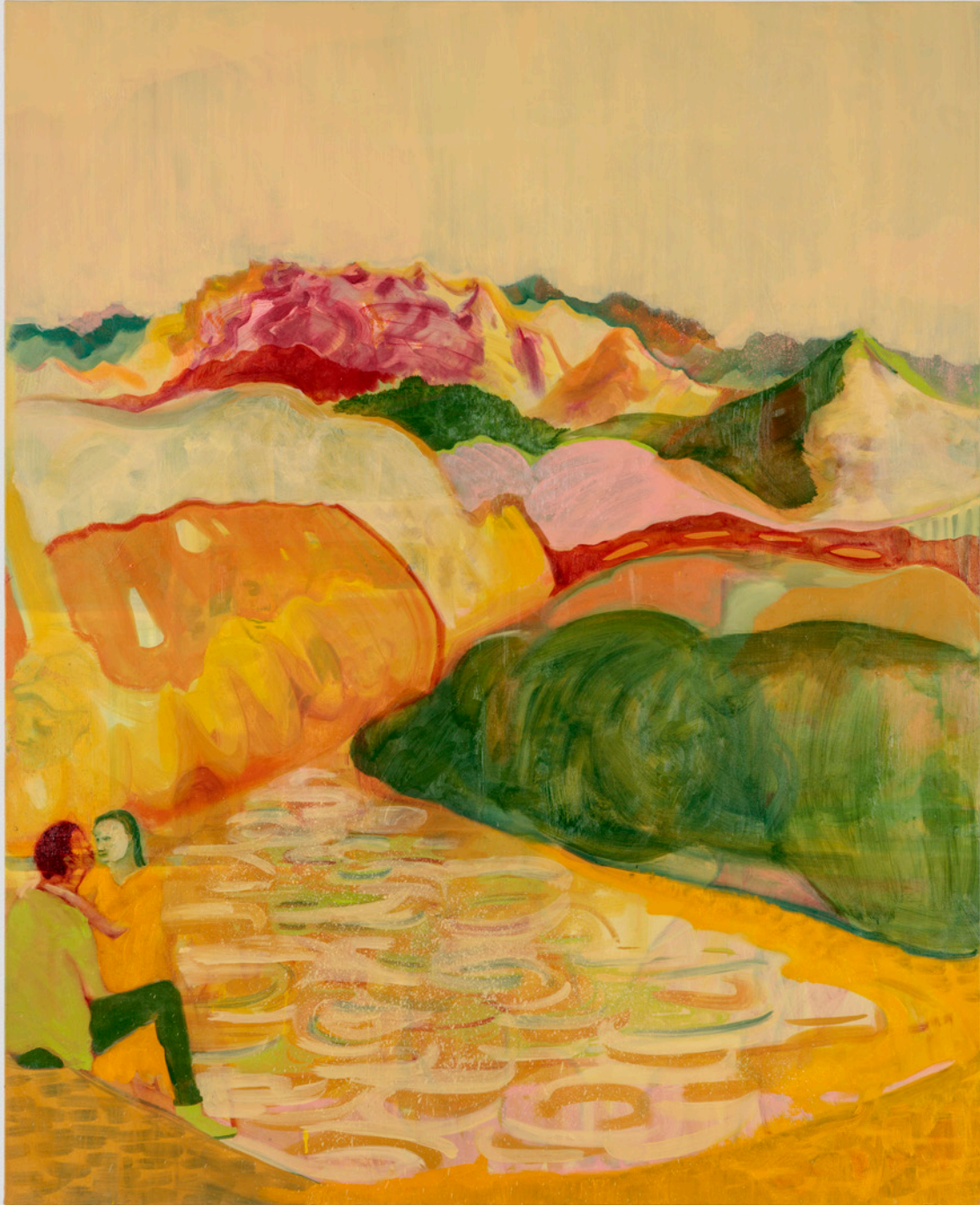
In contrast, Showering paints with a light touch, often creating diaphanous landscapes that recede into the distance. The golden tones of her oils on canvas, accented by wine reds and seasoned greens, make you feel as if you are looking into her inner world, where bittersweet memories swirl around pleasant reveries about how life might turn out.

The figures in Showering's paintings — along with the mountains, rivers and forests — are dreamy, almost ghostly. Her brush strokes — both quick and confident — bring just the right kick of precision, making for images that resonate in the mind's eye long after you see them in the flesh. Her love of late 19th and early 20th century European painting is palpable.



Antonia Showering, "A Valediction," 2018, oil on canvas, 63 x 55-1/8 inches, (Courtesy of the artist and Baert Gallery, Los Angeles.)

Despite significant differences in style, subject and paint handling — as well as attitude and outlook — both artists invite us to ponder the elusiveness of identity, particularly as it plays out along the permeable borders between appearances and reality.



Antonia Showering, "Histories," 2018, oil on canvas, 63 x 51-1/8 inches, (Courtesy of the artist and Baert Gallery, Los Angeles.)