

DAVID NOLAN **NEW YORK**

527 West 29th Street New York NY 10001

Tel 212-925-6190 Fax 212-334-9139

info@davidnolangallery.com

www.davidnolangallery.com

The New York Times

April 24, 2009

PETER SAUL

David Nolan

527 West 29th Street, Chelsea

Through May 23

The irrepressible Peter Saul, now 74, continues his cheerfully acerbic, riotously goofy ways. The paintings in this entertaining show are made in Mr. Saul's signature Pop-Surrealist cartoon style. With their rubbery, pneumatic forms neatly rendered with a spongy, semi-pointillist touch in glowing colors, they are like much-enlarged stills from a twisted animated film.

There are three different types of pictures: weirdly personal, violently political and insouciantly art historical. In "Viva la Difference," a grinning bon vivant in pajamas with a martini in one hand wraps his arm around an amorphous blob that sprouts multiple breasts and is perforated by numerous vaginal orifices. (Talk about your male gaze!)

On the political front, there's "Stalin & Mao," in which the dictators are represented as giants punching the heads off enemy soldiers. As for art history, "Better Than de Kooning," a translation of de Kooning's "Woman" paintings from the 1950s into a picture of bulging, writhing, tubular forms, is visually captivating and amusingly Oedipal.

"Beckmann's the Night" is based on a 1919 painting by Max Beckmann. In Mr. Saul's version, a green maniac armed with a knife and a pistol attacks a naked blonde tied by her wrists to an overhead beam, while Beckmann himself licks the swollen foot of a half-naked man who hangs by the neck. A careening bullet rips through the flesh of the strung-up victims. Mr. Saul's picture reminds us that few sights are more gripping to behold than scenes of horrific carnage.

KEN JOHNSON