

ARTnews

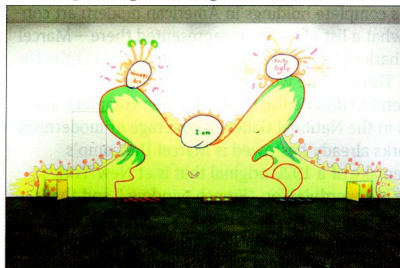
Lily van der Stokker

Leo Koenig

It's difficult to imagine what historians will deduce from the art of Lily van der Stokker. She talks about making work with "as little meaning as possible," that is filled with "useless information." She concentrates on those aspects of her art that she thinks have failed; when critics take her to task, she finds inspiration in their comments. She extracts "failed" segments and makes new works out of them.

She is not the first to demonstrate that the harder artists work against their own taste, the more full of character their art becomes. The happy irony in van der Stokker's case is that the approach enabled her to arrive at a charming, rather uplifting style, with reminders of Peter Max, *Yellow Submarine*-like animation, and kindergarten. What belies her professed irresponsibility more than anything is her work ethic—nobody would work quite this hard on something he or she regarded as meaningless.

In this show, titled "Terrible and Ugly," van der Stokker had her dealer build a wall that almost shut off the rear gallery. The kiddie-size door she left was very much in keeping with her art's repeated shifts of scale and zany displacements. Her paintings, drawings, and murals



Lily van der Stokker, *Whoopy I Am Ugly*, 2010, acrylic paint on wall and mixed media, installation view. Leo Koenig.

sprout pieces of tiny furniture or fanciful multicolored rugs; her color schemes are studiously tasteless; and she loves to incorporate nonsequiturs—in the works themselves, in their titles, or both. But *Whoopy I Am Ugly* (2010), for example, isn't actually ugly, nor was anything that she included here altogether terrible. It was all perfectly acceptable, pleasantly entertaining stuff—even though that might be the last thing van der Stokker would want to hear.

—Robert Ayers

Ayers, Robert. "Lily van der Stokker." *ARTnews*, December 2010, pp112,113.