



Sandy Winters: *Bring 'em On*, 2007, oil, collage and mixed mediums on wood, 72 inches square; at George Adams.

Sandy Winters at George Adams

Sandy Winters's recent paintings present a world blooming in a toxic environment. The semi-domesticated wilderness of exurbs, with picket fences, cornfields and small ponds, becomes the stage for trippy scenes of real and artificial creatures conducting the messy processes of life. Bulbous glass vessels resembling fishbowls, fire hydrants and steatopygic fertility figures are set in landscapes run amok. The vessels seem to mutate in function from one painting to the next, from containers for experiments and random junk left behind to protective cocoons grown by the creatures living inside.

Like Bosch, Winters packs both the insides and outsides of the vessels with scenes of perplexing organic processes. In *Bring 'em On*, little corkscrew shapes fly in orderly formation toward the glass

vessel, while in the distance a convoy of tanks and turtles mimics a ring of elephants leading each other trunk-to-tail. The title of this piece, with its reference to George W. Bush's infamous line, reflects the scene's air of simmering violence. The corkscrews share the air with shapes reminiscent of military drones, while scattered creatures seem to spar and shoot in the far distance.

Winters's style fits firmly into the tendency toward psychedelic puffiness that runs through Charles Burchfield, Dr. Seuss, *The Yellow Submarine* and Pixar animation. There is the sense in her pieces that any one thing could become any other thing. Tree bark turns into fleshy lips and sex organs, telephones into slugs and mushrooms into submarines. In *Living in a Fishbowl*, biomorphized tools—a hair dryer, a drill—grow out of tree trunks and blow bubbles out of their snouts. Mutations arising from unstoppable radioactivity-induced fertility bring to mind the wildlife preserve that's flourished around Chernobyl since the reactor meltdown in 1986.

Winters's previous work has included prints, wall drawings and installations—formats outside the confines of traditional painting. Though she mixes mediums somewhat in these new pictures, gluing prints and aluminum sheets to unprimed birch-ply panels, the works feel constrained by being in easel format. Winters relies heavily on dark outlines to define forms, which makes the images a bit illustrative. Her light brushwork leaves much of

the wood ground showing—a nice touch, but the brushstrokes seem too careful, rarely matching in interest the scenes depicted. Her idea, though, carries through: no matter how humans mess things up, life will tumble along, with or without us.

—Julian Kreimer