

Los Angeles Times

Review: Natalie Frank makes a big, riveting mess at ACME.

November 1, 2013 | By David Pagel



Raw talent, restless energy and the sense that something has gone very wrong run every which way in Natalie Frank's new paintings, which turn themselves inside out with such wicked swiftness that it's hard to know up from down, good from bad, us from them.

The New York painter is no purist. Titled "The Scene of a Disappearance," her first solo show in Los Angeles, at ACME, is a big messy mix of people and beasts, their limbs, organs and torsos rearranged in ways that rival Picasso's wildest paintings while capturing the grisliness of crimescene TV.

Frank slices and dices like a food processor, chopping Francis Bacon's ghoulish humans and Lucian Freud's meaty people into bite-size chunks she then cooks into dishes that look delicious from a distance but monstrous up close. Never letting good manners get in the way of a sucker punch, Frank's paintings lock repulsion and lust in an embrace that rips logic to ribbons.

Genres, such as still life, portraiture and landscape, do not collide so much as they run rampant, creating mongrel offspring whose DNA is more twisted than their sources.