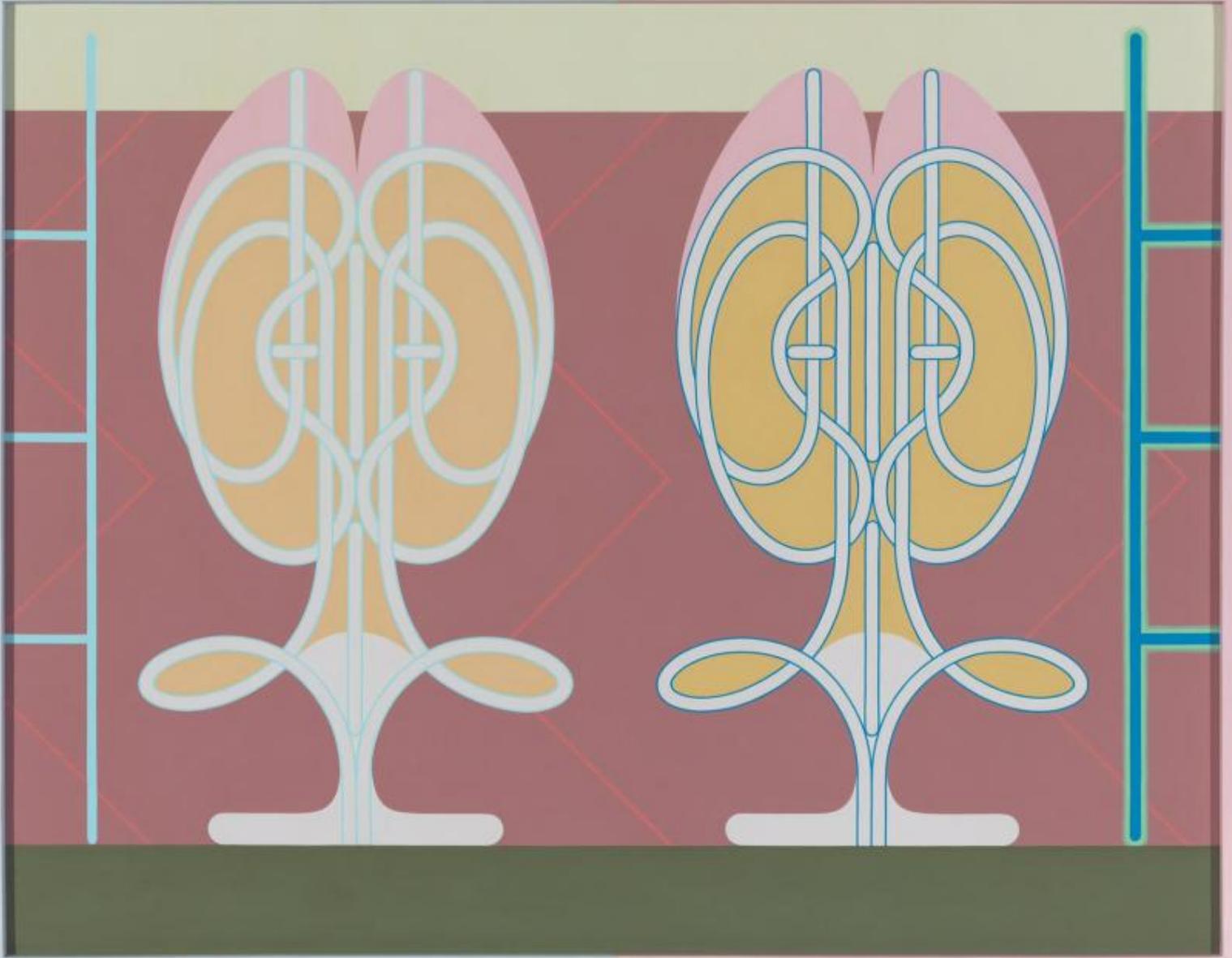


ENTERTAINMENT & ARTS

Review: The residents of 'Lonesome Valley' play well with one another



Barbara Rossi's "Double Crossing Lonesome Valley" (1981), acrylic on Masonite in artist's frame, 28 inches by 35 inches.(Loudhailer Gallery)

By DAVID PAGEL

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There's one great reason to visit "Meanwhile in Lonesome Valley," an invigorating little exhibition organized by artist Sayre Gomez for Loudhailer Gallery. That reason is Barbara Rossi's great little painting from 1981.

Titled “Double Crossing Lonesome Valley,” the nearly symmetrical composition presents a pair of arabesque-adorned shapes. As if posing for their portraits, each shape stands on an olive-green base, which could be a tabletop or a lawn. Their indeterminate scale is the tip of the iceberg.

Rossi’s shapes, painted slightly different shades of the same colors, evoke a flock of improbable associations, some tasteful, even prim, others sensuous, nearly salacious. If a bouquet of flowers mated with a vase, its offspring might resemble the abstract figures. The same could be said of a French horn and the lips that play it. Hearts, breasts and buttocks also come to mind.

Part of the pleasure of Rossi’s precisely painted picture is that it’s nonsensical. The palette is even weirder — an unlikely combination of pastels, both lovely and ugly, with some industrial-strength tints adding to the unexpected complexity.

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There are seven other really good reasons to visit the exhibition: three queasy paintings by Heather Guertin; an oddly enchanting ceramic-tile cartoon by Liz Craft; a wonderfully unsettling digital print by Chanel Von Habsburg-Lothringen; and a pair of polymorphous pieces by Orion Martin.

All play well with one another. Poetic compression never looked better.

Loudhailer Gallery, 2648 La Cienega Ave., L.A., (323) 369-1594, through Aug. 1. Open Thursdays-Saturdays, www.loudhailergallery.com

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