



Art | Reviews

Brian Calvin

★★★★★

Anton Kern Gallery, through Oct 14
(see Chelsea)

Art



Postimpressionism meets *Paris, Texas* in Brian Calvin's latest show. There is an on-the-road story brewing in these new paintings—most of which portray bohemian-looking girls with luscious pink lips, highlighted by segmented white lines that resemble lanes on a highway. Two canvases, *Heads Believe* and *Heads See*, present yin/yang pairs of female faces—one black with blond hair, the other

white and brunet—in compositions that strongly recall Picasso's 1932 masterpiece *Girl Before a Mirror*. A wall of the show is devoted to ink drawings, including one of a barmaid at a beer tap that inevitably echoes Manet's *Bar at the Folies Bergère*.

Calvin uses fast-drying, unforgiving acrylic, which makes his flawless surfaces all the more impressive. The portrait *Killer* may contain a wink at his chosen medium: A girl, her fingers positioned in a V as if she holding a cigarette, has long—think fake-acrylic—fingernails. Each nail contains a painting-within-the-painting, beach scenes with tiny footprints visible in the sand.

Several paintings riff on Christian references (for example, "Footprints in the Sand" is the title of an inspirational poem about Christ). In *Music (Borrowed Tune)*, a girl with stringy black hair in overalls and a Rolling Stones-lips T-shirt raises her middle and ring fingers—not, as you might expect given her hippie appearance, separated into a peace sign, but held together in benediction. Is it possible that Calvin is suggesting that there might be a place for God among the hipsters?
—Bridget L. Goodbody