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Mike Kelley

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Nine largish canvases, made between 1990 and 1995, renew our acquaintance with the late master of the scrofulous sublime. There are three types, in acrylic on wood panel: egg-shaped, amoeboid, and rectangular with radiating squares. Furiously noodled brushwork, floating crazy faces (looking alarmed in “Prenatal Mutual Recognition of Betty and Barney Hill”), and high-keyed saccharine color deliver the echt-Kelley effect of antic unease. One oval, in faux woodgrain, displays a painted poster advertising a college-fraternity competition for “Hanging Effigies.” Kelley was our faithful reporter on such sinister madness, out there in the national dark, and a comic scourge of our possible deep-down share in it. He would have had a field day in this Presidential year.

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