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Kristine Moran in New York Amber Villas, Artinfo, July 17th 2009

Kristine Moran's aptly titled exhibition "Laugh Until My Teeth Fall Out," her first solo show in New York, now on view at Nicelle Beauchene Gallery through July 25, presents fun and lighthearted paintings that become foreboding with the addition of disjointed limbs or dilapidated carnival rides. The Canadian-born Moran, who lives and works in Brooklyn, focuses on rituals and fantasies connected to weddings, carnivals, and other culturally significant events, using the freshness of her brushwork to draw the viewer in and the addition of subtle psychological undertones to invite further investigation.

Moran's lushly painted surfaces combine patches of high-voltage color with murky backgrounds of blues, browns, and grays. Her paintings, all from 2009, employ an energetic brush mark that creates an effect similar to the trace lines that occur in photographs when a camera is set on a long shutter speed at night. They contain clusters of wavy lines and mounds of color that, from far away, form loosely painted representational images, but up close fall apart into abstraction.

After the Last Dance presents a strong asymmetrical composition with loose passages of paint and sparse sections of impasto combined with dramatic lighting. It also includes a pair of disembodied arms surrounded by the folds of a wedding dress and a floating wedding cake. Alluding to Mary Heilmann's iconic pink and black painting Save the Last Dance for Me (1979), Moran's Dance keeps the tension of the composition in Heilmann's original but adds the arms, which fall toward the bottom-right corner of the work and imply a collapsed bride and a should-have-been-perfect day that did not go exactly according to plan.

The theme of weddings also plays into Moran's Consummated. At just 16 by 20 inches, the painting presents a landscape created from a messy paint application. This, combined with a mountain peak that could be part of a wedding dress or veil, and patches of white that allude to the dress lying bunched up on the floor, implies a passionate night, or at least the vivid memory of one. The insertion of sexual imagery into a painting with energetic abstract marks brings to mind the work of British artist Cecily Brown.

In Merry-Go-Round Broke Down, Moran presents the torso of a white carousel horse with bent legs emerging from the characteristically messy paint. The image of the horse evokes memories of childhood and, like the collapsed bride in After the Last Dance, serves as an example of a fantasy experience that has been deconstructed. Revealing the underbelly in seemingly utopian situations is a theme that carries over from some of Moran's earlier work, which includes images of car crashes, science fiction

landscapes, urbanism, and visionary architecture and design. Moran studied landscape architecture before switching to fine arts, and it shows in her architectural layering of brushstrokes and in paintings like *Elliptical Eccentricities*, in which a building protrudes out of a dense circle of horizontal spinning lights that look like the motion blur generated from a Tilt-A-Whirl spinning at Mach 5.

In the gallery, just to the left of *Elliptical Eccentricities*, hangs another painting that contains a spinning carnival ride, *Leading the Float*. Instead of existing at warp speed, though, the Ferris wheel in this work appears to be on its last legs. Bent over in dilapidation, the wheel is positioned on a grassy knoll and set against a forebodingly dark sky. The painting draws attention to the skillfulness of Moran's brushwork, spotlighting a cluster of wide yellow strokes at its center as well as her attention to detail, with a beautifully delicate fringe surrounding the wheel.