

THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY

GUARDIAN

'Sarah Cain: New Work'

Through Feb. 15, Lucky Tackle

DISPENSING WITH THE usual typed-up formalities, Sarah Cain has written the names of her paintings directly on the gallery wall, on the right-hand side as you walk in. There's a P.S. at the end: "Sarah Cain needs a home, this side of the bay or that...LOW OR NO RENT, no joke," and her e-mail address. It's a bold plea, but it's also a bit childish – not just the idea of scribbling on the wall, but also the implicit denial of "all of the loonies out there" – to place such seemingly naive trust in the public. It's a dichotomy that runs through the rest of Cain's work, as well. Her paintings are deceptively simple; their big, basic shapes and the sloppy drips in her rainbow painting are perhaps intended as a warning that we shouldn't read too much into them, although the carefully considered wordage on the wall reveals how much thought the artist has invested in her work, and her fragile hope that we'll linger and look for meaning in everything, even the parts of the exhibit that seem most hastily assembled. In a sense, she is a "painter's painter," with every brush stroke well planned and fretted over. But she's also clearly interested in playing with the division between painting and other, more three-dimensional endeavors, like sculpture and architecture. With their simple shapes and pencil-sketch lines, her works on paper utilize the barest of cues to make us imagine depth. Elsewhere in the gallery, Cain has painted in the concave corners where two walls meet the floor, effectively transforming an open-ended architectural space into something finite, with perimeter lines and a well-defined interior. Not only do her created spaces allow us to walk inside and inhabit them, they also provide a (subconsciously?) symbolic projection of her search for a place to call home. Fri.-Sun., 1-5 p.m., and by appointment, 6608 San Pablo, Oakl. (510) 484-4373. (Lindsey Westbrook)

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