

SFGATE

"Laeh Glenn: Tammy Rae Carland turns up the pressure to always be on"

By Kenneth Baker

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Glenn's elegies: Los Angeles painter Laeh Glenn has a show of quietly comic but deeply considered new works at Altman Siegel. They tell us, though, less about the world than about the art world around us.

Summoning an ancestry that includes Allan McCollum's "plaster surrogates" for paintings and the dysfunctional Pop furnishings of the late Richard Artschwager, Glenn makes paintings that evoke things firmly lodged in memory as ciphers, but unrecoverable in detail.

One untitled piece contains the makings of a still life: a round-cornered tabletop, a vase-like shape surrounded by puffs of white softly mottled with gray. But the image's flattened black, white and gray shapes, for all their sharpness, have so little detail and definition that they incite mild hallucination. The flower blossoms, which cast no shadows, might be puffy clouds drifting in a distant sky beyond the window that is the picture. A blob of black at the bottom, reminiscent of one of Salvador Dali's melting pocket watches, seems to spill out of the picture space.

The piece as a whole can read as a picture of a still life arrangement or of a still life painting. Glenn's style implies a depletion of value in that distinction, and in our attention to it.

Several of Glenn's pieces have black frames that stop short of running around the objects' perimeters. They offer a presentational equivalent of "etcetera," but like the stripped definition of her pictorial forms, the abbreviated frames seem to anticipate cursory attention and snap conclusions.

The summary quality of Glenn's work implies a reception in which knowingness claims the traction that in a less-hurried, less-calculating art domain, belonged only to vision.

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