

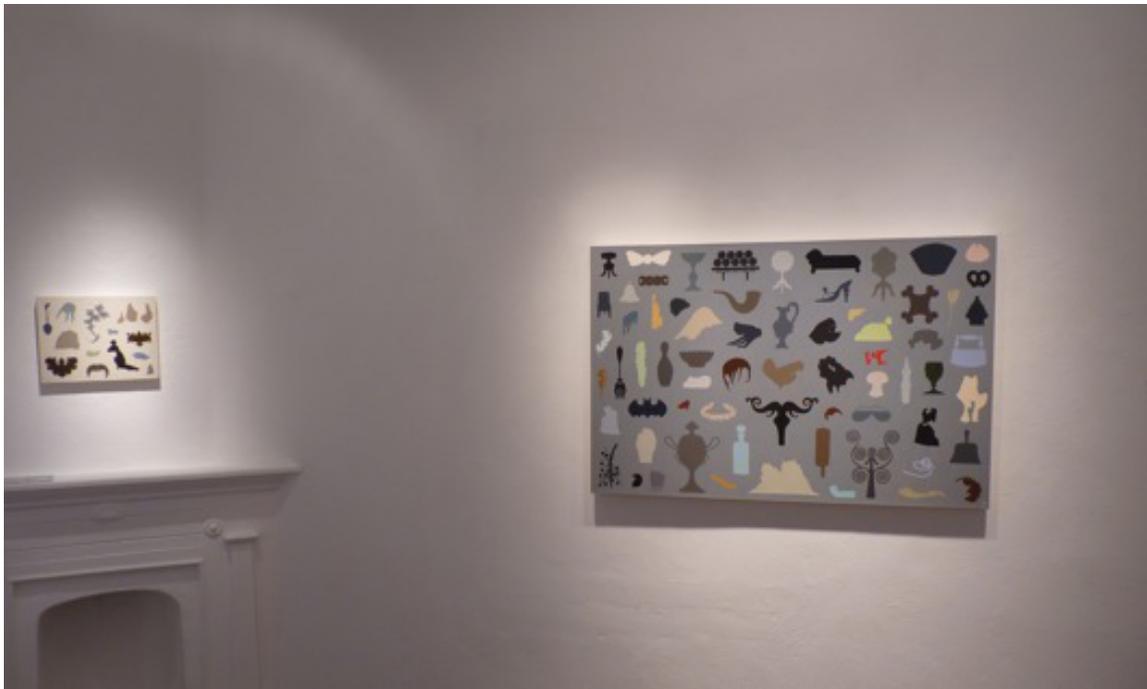


ALL IN ONE: PAINTINGS BY REBECCA SHORE

*Jenni Higginbotham*

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In conjunction with an exhibition at Corbett vs. Dempsey in Chicago, Eight Modern Gallery (Santa Fe, New Mexico), will show the paintings of Rebecca Shore (NAP #41) until May 5. This two-gallery exhibit, titled *All in One*, features about 50 paintings, 23 of which are at Eight Modern.



Installation view

*All in One* can be viewed as two bodies of work. One group of paintings features arrangements of absurd silhouettes and shapes on a flat ground color. Her color combinations are mostly neutrals and hues within a single color family with an occasional primary red or celadon green shape to break up the regularity of the composition. The shapes are evenly spaced with an inch or so between each object. They are arranged formally the way one might organize a collection of seashells or butterflies. The viewer is meant to consider each shape and its formal relationship to the other

images in the painting. Each shape, whether it be a figure from Chinese wallpaper or an uninterpretable blob traced from a TV screen-shot, has to meet the painting's organizational standard. The game is to figure out what the organizing principle might be.



Rebecca Shore | *2011-01*, 2011, oil on canvas on panel, 11 x 14 inches, Photo courtesy of Eight Modern



Rebecca Shore | *2010-10*, 2010, oil on canvas, 30 x 45 inches, Photo courtesy of Eight Modern

In the interview section of the exhibition catalog, Shore says, “I try to make an arrangement where things relate to one another in a way that allows you to experience them without being confused[...] You’re urged to make relationships through form, but your questions about identity are often not answered.”



Rebecca Shore | *2011-16*, 2011, distemper on panel, 31 x 25 inches, Photo courtesy of Eight Modern

The other paintings in the exhibition are evocative of maps, networks or alien motherboards—some sort of navigational or technological device. Once again, Shore relies on found and manipulated imagery to create these paintings. They are almost entirely linear and abstract geometric shapes, although the occasional representational image finds its way into the work. There is a similar level of absurdity to these paintings. On one hand, the work invites the viewer to interpret the formal relationships and fit the pieces into neat categories. However, the seemingly random imagery resists identification, toying with our general acceptance of organizational standards. Before standardization occurs, the process of organization is personal and meaningful. Sometimes, it is quite arbitrary.



Rebecca Shore | *2009-20-G*, detail, 2009, gouache on paper, 14 x 10 inches

Shore's process is rooted in an intellectual framework, but the paintings are also traditionally beautiful objects. A nuanced handling of the materials is apparent in the subtle brushwork and delicate variations of paint transparency. These works are made with a variety of media: gouache, oil, distemper (a paint using rabbit skin glue as the binder), acrylic, and egg tempera with casein. These subtleties are appealing, but her technique is not so lush that it detracts from the conceptual push/pull of the imagery. Shore manages to balance cool and detached humor with a genuine fondness for the formal qualities of painting. She clearly loves sifting through a variety reference materials until she finds a combination that intuitively make sense to her. This work is worth seeing and spending some time with.



Rebecca Shore | 2011-15, detail, 2011, distemper on panel, 31 x 25 inches

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*Jenni Higginbotham is an artist and blogger working out of Santa Fe, New Mexico. She makes graphite and charcoal drawings as well as prints, oil paintings and mixed media illustrations. She has a Bachelor of Arts in painting and printmaking with a minor in art history, and a Master of Fine Arts in studio art.*