

Critics' Picks

Sara Bright

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On View: George Lawson Gallery

The playful, painterly gestures of Sara Bright's small movable frescoes at George Lawson Gallery at first belie the artist's rigorous, post-Minimalist attention to form. Beneath built-up layers of plaster on burlap and wood, the panels themselves are palpably sculptural. Viewed from the side as they hang on the gallery walls, where the edges of the paint extend just beyond the corners of the plaster, the works appear to float.

The small window of time in which paint can be applied to wet plaster limits the ways in which it can be layered and otherwise incorporated into frescoes. Bright uses this to her advantage, by refining her language into simple gestures, often repeated, as in *Dark Water* (all works 2015), which replicates a blue, craggy wave shape, like the sprawl of a signature, across a varying field of indigo created with a much wider brush, applied so thinly in places that it seems to glow from within. Bright's free-form strokes appear spontaneous but are rigorously composed; and other, more pared-down geometric paintings, such as the gridded *Windowpane*, recall Agnes Martin's restraint and emphasis on line itself.

A few of the frescoes flirt with figuration, as in *Coi*, a field of grassy green in which tiny, darker smudges of the hue seem to be rising from beneath, anchored by a few lines of pink and blue that suggest the edges of a pond. But the majority consist of two thick lines with a similar curve, or two repeated in different colors and configurations, creating studies of gesture in different registers.

Sara Bright: Frescoes is on view at George Lawson Gallery, in San Francisco, through October 10, 2015.

