



Shotgun Review

Casual Separates

By Shotgun Reviews *March 12, 2013*

Two 18- by 24-inch stretched paintings bracket the show of new work by Rebekah Goldstein at City Limits Gallery. The compositions of both works, *You Should Meet My Sister* (2013) and *The Morning After* (2012), push against the edges of their canvases and seem like they could be bigger: all broad interlocking planes, washes of color, and architectonic lines. What Goldstein accomplishes on the walls between these bracketing works is a liberation of their protean compositions from those bounding edges. In a group of seven small cutouts, the artist takes the washes, planes, and lines from the flat surfaces and choreographs them in a shallow space. The cutouts' nature hovers between object and image, combining low-relief sculptural elements and layered fragments of canvas independent of a supporting structure. Each piece stretches from the rectangle, languidly transgressing the picture plane in a move from implied to actual space.

These compositions are no less rigorous for their wit, which makes accessible the conceptual decisions within them. The cutouts are patches of color on pieces of cut canvas that intersect with thicker pieces of painted wood. Lines jump from one shape to the next, and small passages of color peek from underneath larger areas of color. The changes of elevation, the imperfect line, and the considered palette address flatness and the thinly sculptural nature of a piece of canvas. The gaps left in the compositions of some of the pieces rally the wall as an element of the entire installation. The artist's inclusion of the architecture of the room dematerializes the picture plane, confusing it with the wall, or a shaped piece of wood, or the layered bits of canvas, or all of them at the same time.

The importance of the two stretched canvases is a reminder, then, of the implied space of painting and the traditional picture plane. The two canvases become a legend for the space of the seven cutouts and vice versa.



Rebekah Goldstein. *The Double #2*, 2013; oil on canvas and wood; 37 x 24 in. Courtesy of the Artist and City Limits Gallery, San Francisco.

When lines sawn into a piece of wood reappear on the flat surface of one of those paintings, their presence pushes against the edges of our assumptions, offering us another way to view the space in these paintings.

Casual Separates is on view at City Limits Gallery, in San Francisco, through March 22, 2013.

Matthew Marchand, an artist and writer, lives and works in San Francisco.