

February 28, 2013

Lucy Dodd: 'The Studio Before 54'

By **ROBERTA SMITH**

No5A

5A East 78th Street, Manhattan

Through March 9

The solo debut of Lucy Dodd, a recent graduate of Bard College, features three enormous paintings as wry as they are beautiful and spatially startling. Leaning against the walls of a demure Upper East Side parlor, the show — organized by the fledging (and as yet spaceless) David Lewis Gallery — inaugurates No5A, the new project space of the dealer Vladimir Restoin Roitfeld and the collector and adviser Eleanor Cayre. The paintings seem to have heaved up from a horizontal position, partly because the surfaces of two of them bear the impressions of an old, wide-plank wood floor, creating a sense of flatness and order strikingly at odds with random marks — stains, footprints, delicate splatters — and the more infinite space they create. Made largely by rubbing dry materials on canvas, they are 12 feet square, and as much drawings as paintings.

The most actively worked — rubbed with rust and black — is “And the cracks spoke of the ‘waters of chaos,’ ” whose materials include graphite, hematite, iron glimmer and the urine of a dog named Bub. Relatively minimal is “the humble deep extreme,” which relies more completely on the wood imprint, except for a galaxy of small black dots, carefully painted rather than splattered. The materials listed on the checklist are more process-oriented and poetic than informative, and also distinctly female. A partial list: “the souls of the shoes of Nanette Lepore, Margiela, Clergerie, a half calf cowboy boot, a no name mule, a foot with foss mud.”

The third work, “Après la Rainbow Bain” (10 feet square) was made on another surface (possibly concrete) and lacks the built-in horizontal banding provided by the wood flooring. It is freer, if not a little too scanty, and its various smudges and smears conjure clouds, a tossing sea and even a bit of rain, consistent with the weather-related title. The paintings are physically eccentric and intimate domesticity: the stretcher bars are covered with the edges of the paintings themselves are exposed; they evoke textiles, especially rugs.



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Male artists don't own the XL artwork format, but they make a majority of the ~~large-scale~~ efforts. So it is inspiring to see a woman handle the format so successfully. The outsize paintings of Julian Schnabel, Anselm Kiefer and [Rudolf Stingel](#) are invoked here, which may be Ms. Dodd's intention. Against theirs, her efforts abjure traditional bravura and hold their own.

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: March 2, 2013

An art review on Friday about an exhibition of work by Lucy Dodd in Manhattan referred incompletely to the site of the exhibition, No5A on East 78th Street. It is the new project space of the dealer Vladimir Restoin Roitfeld and the collector and adviser Eleanor Cayre; it is not solely Mr. Roitfeld's space.