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*Looking at ten Untitled paintings by Caitlin Lonigan
from Made in L.A. 2014 at the Hammer.*

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If these paintings were scripts, what actions would they direct and what choices would they offer?

There is an instinct to catalog the many effects: this and that, this over that, this behind that. This instinct structures looking the way a meandering path structures movement: at once, in the moment, looking back over actions taken.

These paintings feature a sci-fi version of a black-and-white palette. Reflective silvers take the place of white and color-infused darks take the place of black. Maybe it is more a light-and-dark dynamic but the binary is strong. Overtones of primary colors are unexpectedly loud. The paintings feature variations on a primary triad of soft yellowish-gold, rosy-copper and patches of familiar blues.¹ Several tertiary colors make significant cameos: leaked dots of tennis ball-green yellow; a rich leafy-green, gestural smudge; hazy purples and reddish-orange veils. All of this creates an offbeat order.

One measure by which to gauge these paintings is how contained they seem to be within their four edges or not. While these paintings feature a patchwork of gestures that create an abundance of localized, pictorial flashes and mini-moments of spatial depth, many of them, over time, snap to an overarching two-dimensional grid-like order.² Some compositions seem lashed together unequivocally to the stretched rectangle.³ Sometimes the compositions are structured more loosely as if the silvery puffs and sheets of bright, thin blue were sent on intersecting paths by cross-continental wind patterns. These point to something bigger than a chain of human actions...something like time or process as an element beyond one rectangle or individual painting.

The layers of material are technologies for seeing. This combines with that to create a clean, clear contrast that sparkles⁴, while this over that creates fuzzy, undifferentiated borders that seem out of focus.⁵ There is an exploratory quality to the visual situations created. Accounting for all the effects and layers, a surplus of energy has been funneled through a carefully-structured system of movement and material application.

Materials in dynamic play keep the eye moving. We tire before the paintings do. The processing runs on.



¹Caitlin Lonegan · Untitled, 2013, Oil, metallic oil, and iridescent oil paint on canvas. 78 x 72 in.



² Caitlin Lonagan, Untitled, 2013
Oil, metallic oil, and iridescent oil paint
on canvas. 84 x 72 in.



³Caitlin Lonagan Untitled, 2013, Oil,
metallic oil, and iridescent oil paint on
canvas. 48 x 48 1/2 in.



4Caitlin Lonegan - DETAIL



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