

Culture Monster

ALL THE ARTS, ALL THE TIME

Art review: HK Zamani, "In-between Air, Land and Sea" at CB1Gallery

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The 15 paintings that make up "In-between Air, Land and Sea," HK Zamani's quietly satisfying exhibition at CB1Gallery, come in two basic sizes.

The five big ones, in the first gallery, draw visitors into a world of gentle whimsy, where simple shapes and even simpler compositions leave Zamani free to noodle around with color and texture.

Sometimes he uses a paintbrush like a pencil, drawing thick black outlines that recall coloring books. At others he uses a house painter's brush, covering the canvas with decisive swipes. At still others he employs a palette knife to slather on paint, then smooth it over.

Zamani is at his best when his works have the presence of unexpected discoveries, serendipitous events that happen on their own. His 10 small canvases, nine of which fill the second gallery, deliver this experience more frequently and deeply than his big ones, which are occasionally constrained by a sense of stiffness that suggests they were executed from studies.



In contrast, Zamani's intimately scaled pictures are relaxed. Less self-conscious, they convey an attractive sense of contentment.

Their humble, down-to-earth demeanors make a virtue of ambiguity. Each seems to be an expansive landscape and a tabletop still life. "Untitled (15)" evokes Morandi and sand castles. "Untitled (12)" brings together the beauty of the Taj Mahal and the pleasure of a long hot bath. Others turn tiny details — four blades of grass, three lime-green lumps and a slithering pink line — into worlds of possibility.

-- David Pagel

CB1Gallery, 207 W. 5th St., L.A., (213) 806-7889, through July 2. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.
www.cb1gallery.com

Image: HK Zamani's "Untitled (25)." Credit: From CB1Gallery