

89.9 KCRW: ART TALK



The Color of Life

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Host: Edward Goldman

We are lucky to have here, in southern California, some of the best art schools in the country. But when several years ago, I went to one of them to see an exhibition of works by students graduating from the Master of Fine Arts program, I left the galleries feeling rather depressed. Most of the art was inept, and I felt sorry for the parents who had been duped into investing thousands of dollars in their kids' education, with such a dismal return.



Benjamin Britton

So you can understand my hesitation about going to see the exhibition of this year's MFA graduates at UCLA's New Wight Gallery. What tempted me was the modest, well-designed brochure presenting a sample of work from each artist. I decided to stop by the exhibition, planning to spend there only a few minutes; instead, I ended up staying for over an hour. Not only did I like the works of all four graduates -- three painters and one video artist -- but I was also surprised by the level of professionalism with which the exhibition was installed. As an extra bonus, two of the painters, Claire Baker and Benjamin Britton, happened to be there, and I had a delightful chat with both of them.



Claire Baker

I liked some of their works more than others, and they didn't seem to mind me saying so. Both artists, already in possession of their own style, demonstrate surprising assurance working on a small as well as a large scale. Both have a predilection for bravura brushwork. Considering the fierce competition among art dealers for fresh, young talent, I was interested to hear if either of these two had already been approached. Not yet, I learned. If you want to see this exhibition, hurry up: it closes this Thursday, March 13. Over the next two months at the New Wight Gallery, there will be three more exhibitions of this year's MFA graduates, each lasting only one week. I definitely want to see all of them and wouldn't be surprised if smart collectors and dealers do the same. To find out the schedule of these upcoming exhibitions, go to the Art Talk page on the KCRW website and click on today's program. And there you can actually see the artworks I'm talking about.