

Los Angeles Times

CLAIRE ANNA BAKER

Review: Exquisite elegance at work in Claire Anna Baker's paintings
April 12, 2013

By Holly Myers

Claire Anna Baker's first L.A. solo show, at Edward Cella Art + Architecture, is a strikingly sophisticated exploration of gesture in the context of painterly abstraction.

Each of the five large, ink-on-polyester paintings installed in the gallery's main space revolves around a stroke of liquid black, set against a ground of pale, softly modulated blues, oranges and pinks.

Though far too large to have been made with a single movement, each stroke is a vision of lightness and spontaneity. It fills the canvas with motion more than form or weight, with a flicker like that of a darting butterfly or a thin, fluttering scrap of silk.



In fact, the gestures are highly deliberate and choreographed, developed through the distillation of physical movements in the studio into a kind of script. (A handful of smaller works also on view gives a sense of how Baker works these forms up from preparatory sketches.)

Baker executes her characters with the studied assurance of a Japanese calligraphy master, balancing ease and control to produce forms that are simultaneously casual and perfected.

Judging from the soft veneer and delicate range of tones in the backgrounds, she does not appear to have given herself a forgiving surface – one can only wonder how many attempts were abandoned to achieve these few exquisitely eloquent expressions. There is no doubt, however, that it was worth the sacrifice.

Edward Cella Art + Architecture, 6018 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, (323) 525-0053, through April 27. Closed Sunday and Monday. www.edwardcella.com

Image: Claire Anna Baker, *Fighter Flight*, 2013, Ink on polyester, 60 x 84 inches (152.4 x 213.4 cm).

Myers, Holly, "Review: Exquisite elegance at work in Claire Anna Baker's paintings," *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 2013. <<http://articles.latimes.com/2013/apr/12/entertainment/la-et-cm-art-review-claire-anna-baker-at-edward-cella-20130409>>