

[ArtSeen Next Section »](#) [Next Article >](#)

## DAINA HIGGINS *New Paintings*

by Charles Schultz

ELIZABETH HARRIS GALLERY | JANUARY 5 – FEBRUARY 4, 2012

Daina Higgins paints in a photo-realist style that is approaching virtuosic. *New Paintings*, her fourth solo show at Elizabeth Harris Gallery, includes nine new works in a variety of modest sizes, the oddest being as long and skinny as a plank. The very American theme of these paintings, which are all landscapes, is the new automobile. Oddly none of the cars is pictured in action; they are all parked, as if waiting for their opportunity to become part of someone's identity. Higgins has a sharp eye for natural light. Sun-smacked windows flare bright white while reflections bend and curve around car hoods and windshields. When Higgins struggles, her paint handling becomes fussy and rote; when she's inspired, the picture builds in surface and compositional complexity without submitting to any cumbersome schematics. "North Philly" (2011) is masterful. It's an inside-looking-out perspective on a car lot, banners (a repeating motif) flitting in the wind. Reflecting in a pane of glass, what the viewer can't see are snatches of ceiling pipes and fluorescent tubes that appear to float in a purple sky. Two works executed on awnings suggest a potential departure. Higgins has long had a fondness for painting the built environment; now she's begun to paint on it too.



Daina Higgins, "South Philly," 2011, oil on canvas, 44" x 50". Courtesy Elizabeth Harris Gallery.