



CRITIC'S CHOICE

Review: Jaime Scholnick's 'Artifacts' potent mix of style, substance



Jaime Scholnick's "Zigzag," 2012, acrylic and flashe on polystyrene, 72 x 120 x 6 inches. (From the artist and CB1 Gallery)

By David Pagel
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"Artifacts," Jaime Scholnick's two-gallery show at CB1 Gallery, is a double-barreled doozy that treats the eye to a cornucopia of visual thrills while giving the mind even more to mull over. Pleasure and pragmatism intermingle as Scholnick brings anger and playfulness into a loaded mixture of style and substance, art and politics, fun and loathing.

The first gallery features fantastic sculptural reliefs, both wall-mounted and freestanding. Each is made of chunks of polystyrene packing material that Scholnick has scavenged from downtown dumpsters and covered with a rainbow of Day-Glo colors. Her painted marks never form neat patterns or logical layouts. Instead, they fill every nook and cranny with the easy adaptability of kid's crafts, the meandering freedom of doodles and the visual kick of graffiti.

Mayan brickwork, by way of Frank Lloyd Wright, lies behind Scholnick's casually cobbled works. The odd shapes of satellites and the space-age synthetics they are made with are also evoked by her asymmetrical sculptures. Some resemble lumpen circuit boards. Others recall cargo cult totems, primitive masks and indecipherable signage. You get the sense that some impending disaster has already happened. With not a bang but a whimper.

A sense of déjà vu haunts the second gallery, where eight glitter-sprinkled portraits of Bush-era politicians hang. Made in 2008, these cockeyed homages strike just the right balance between innocence and viciousness. Making such figures as Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and John Ashcroft appear to have more in common with Third World despots or *lucha libre* wrestlers, they lay bare the tragic cartooniness of American politics.

CB1 Gallery, 207 W. 5th St., (213) 806-7889, through Oct. 7. Closed Mon.-Wed.
www.cb1gallery.com