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Fine Shines at Rosenthal

New Yorker Jane Fine, showing for the first time on the West Coast at Michael Rosenthal, struggles, like many painters, to respond to moral crisis in terms rooted in her art form.

Fine tries to hold a distorting mirror up to American society's unspoken obsession with domination and bloodshed. Consider its embrace of violence in mediated forms, such as movies and video games, and its amnesia regarding real warfare and its cost.

Fine begins a painting such as "Fatso" (2010) with pours of acrylic that then guide incursions of brushwork and cartoonish elaboration with ink markers. Many of her pieces make explicit reference to war machinery, whereas "Fatso" contrives a horrible hybrid of metaphors: a gargantuan dessert as a figure for gluttony and for the proverbial ship of state. Here, as elsewhere in Fine's work, brushstrokes occasionally masquerade as band-aids, drips double as features of an image and as disillusioning details.

Fine takes everything to grotesque comic extremes, which would make a whole show of her work too much to bear were she not also an adventurous colorist who openly delights in painting.



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