

# Los Angeles Times

REVIEW

## A vast landscape unfolds in bands of color: Emily Davis Adams at CB1 Gallery

By Christopher Knight  
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Emily Davis Adams, *No. 131*, 2016, oil on canvas over panel, 11" x 14"

Light is both a particle and a wave in 24 small, abstract paintings by Brooklyn artist Emily Davis Adams. Wholly non-figurative images turn out to be representational, yet classical distinctions between those two terms readily dissolve into emanations of colored light.

Their intimacy demands close perusal. The largest painting in Adams' lovely second show at CB1 Gallery is just 24 by 20 inches, while many are in the vicinity of 9 by 12.

In each, two or three stacked rectangles of color appear to subtly bend, ripple and bow. Frequent allusions to landscape – to immeasurable skies spreading out over Great Plains or vast oceans – press against the pictures' diminutive size. Light shimmies up between color bands, while shadows reveal a dimple, an unexpected curvature or soft creases.

Adams begins these small oil paintings by constructing a little theatrical stage set from colorful construction paper. Like sculptor Thomas Demand, whose mural-scale photographs show rooms and other places that he has reconstructed from paper and cardboard, she makes paintings that embrace a fabricated reality.

In one, the center of a brownish-white rectangle is textured with scores of tiny, feathery brush marks. The result is like moon glow on a rippling pond. Imagination is more important than knowledge, as Albert Einstein taught us, and slow looking is a condition for really seeing the visual and material conundrums that Adams paints.