

# MIAMI RAIL

JENNY BRILLHART, NOONDAY

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Over the past few years, Jenny Brillhart has spent a lot of time in her studio, watching Miami's light dredge its way through dust and bits of wood and drywall. Her art moves from sculpture with painting to painting with sculpture to one or the other completely, and is both large and small, but certain constants remain. She renders our diffuse interiors—generic, nondescript spaces of work and life—in a way that draws attention to how the room mirrors the mind, how it can become the mind. Brillhart's painting exists in the American lineage of Charles Sheeler's eggshell blues and robin-egg whites, Edward Hopper's emotive drafts, and Richard Diebenkorn's fractured suburban landscapes. But before we get carried away, they speak also to Miami's temporary architecture—to all those low ceilings and sheets of drywall—and the subjectivities dwelling within.

Here, drywall is both a thematic and compositional element, as 4x8 sheets provide the substrate for a monumental sweep of five paintings of the inside of her studio. There are no formal reinventions, she is merely tightening her aim. While the way she handles paint and space has been similar, she sometimes attaches pieces of wood, or paints sculptures. Here though, with the exception of violent rifts in two different paintings (one repaired, one not) and a few scrapes, the task of representation falls on the paint.

Barry Hannah once wrote that in Mississippi, it's difficult to achieve a vista. Miami's the same. In the older buildings that Brillhart paints, the awe that the viewer might feel when looking at or from stronger examples of architecture is cramped. But Brillhart defends the unmonu-

mental, and by playing with atmospheric perspective and the placement of the horizon, these scenes seem much more like, well, scenes. Adding to the cinematic feel of these widescreen paintings is a custom bench that Brillhart built with her husband and installed on the opposite end of the gallery. When the viewer sits they must look up to the paintings, in more ways than one. This bench is simultaneously a return and a departure for the artist. For years, she's been incorporating the very elements that she's painting (scrapes of wood, usually) into



Noonday, 4x8', Detail

the paintings themselves, thus creating a conceptual game akin to Joseph Kosuth's three chairs. Here, though, we don't have any additional elements col-

laged into the paintings, but the bench, as a viewing position and a sculptural element, enlarges the dimensions of the paintings to those of the gallery.



Noonday, Installation view  
Emerson Dorsch

generic ways. With focus and careful attention to everything within her purview, she cuts through the haze of placelessness and arrives at a room of her own.

That said, I don't think her conflation of subject and material is a conceptual ploy. It seems a bit older than that, an admittance that the objects represented often define how they are represented. Keeping that in mind, Brillhart doesn't settle in reproducing generic spaces in