

ARTnews

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Lois Dodd

Alexandre

Lois Dodd has reinvented herself. Once again. The 84-year-old artist's sly new self-portraits take the form of long, dark-green shadows cast across fields of

Argenta (2010), discovered the pearl-white petals of a prickly, fleshy subject. Many of these pictures could be viewed as botanical portraits.

Although it is certain that Dodd's dark, Down East landscapes owe a debt to Charles Burchfield, and other works



Lois Dodd, *Shadow Painter*, 2008, oil on canvas, 14" x 20". Alexandre.

lime-green grass. In *Shadow of Painter Painting "September Light"* (2009), we see the silhouette of the artist at work, with an easel, tubes of paint, a palette, and a small study of autumnal trees in view—the actual oil on linen was also in the show. All these items are neatly stacked on the left-hand side of the canvas—rectangles within the larger rectangle, suggesting worlds within worlds. Details matter, such as the way the easel's wing nut and bolt create a small arrow.

In this series, Dodd plays with the ambiguity of shadows. The silhouette in "*September Light*," for example, represents Dodd at work, but it also suggests a lanky, reclining, duck-billed Venus and has something in common with the witty sculptures of her former husband, William King. The viridian-green shapes in *Shadow Painter* (2008) suggest that the artist could be building a cathedral with her brush, or fencing with a horse.

Dodd's paint looks as fresh as the daisies she sometimes renders. This show included depictions of little lily buds, set in an exquisitely fashioned, emerald-green realm. In her painted garden, viewers discovered the bell-shaped blossom of the purple columbine, and, in *Salvia*

evoked the plein-air paintings of Edwin Dickinson, what was abundantly evident in this show was the ultimate distinctiveness of Dodd's work. And the fact that it can be seriously funny, too.

—Gerard Haggerty