

# Westword

## ***Four Solos Create a Beautiful Pattern at Robischon Gallery***

**Barbara Takenaga, Linda Fleming, Jaq Chartier and Alison Hall are showcased.**

**By Michael Paglia  
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No one else in town can put different artists together as adeptly and smoothly as Jennifer Doran. Co-director of Robischon Gallery with her husband, Jim Robischon, Doran is the eye behind the gallery's state-of-the-art exhibition design, including the current collection of four solos.



Installation view of Alison Hall: Heirlooms. Courtesy  
Of Robischon Gallery

The quartet of offerings concludes in the viewing room with an intimate show of Alison Hall's sublime, mostly small abstractions. With Alison Hall: Heirlooms, Hall is making her first appearance in Denver. At first I thought these pristine paintings were essentially nothing more than perfectly proportioned rectangles covered in monochrome finishes of black or blue with utterly smooth surfaces built up with plaster and oil on the underlying panels. If that had been all they were, that would have been enough...but there's much more to Hall's paintings. Some have painted compositions, including a tremendously engaging grid with a regular pattern of little circles done in two closely aligned shades of blue; in another are roughly formed shapes. The painted patterns and shapes are very subtle, since Hall employs similar colors to create them. A more striking departure from the minimalist aesthetic of the monochromes are the pencil marks: As you walk by the paintings, light hits tiny reflective bits in the patterns of graphite strokes marking up the grounds.

Though modern artists like Ad Reinhardt or Agnes Martin come to mind, for the paint and the pencil, respectively, Hall notes that her sources also include artists from further back in history, in particular Giotto and Masolino. She's written about how moved she was by certain depictions of the Virgin she saw when she was in Italy, which she believes were based on the artists' mothers. Given the work's contemporary appearance, this Italianate aspect is completely unexpected, though one painting, the only monumental Hall in the show, hints at it. In the spectacular "Ancestral," a pattern of graphite dashes that can barely be made out suggests a ghosted scene of a church interior.

The tissue that links the works of these four artists is their use of patterning. While none go in for the expected geometric abstraction and they each take a different route, the patterns in their pieces become part of a broader vocabulary of expressions. As presented at Robischon, their work is so sensitively interrelated, the four solos read as a beautifully focused group show.