

SAMUEL FREEMAN

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Review Mie Olise's exploration of the frailty of 'home'



Mie Olise's "Noplocia," installation view at Samuel Freeman, 2014 (Courtesy Samuel Freeman, Los Angeles.)

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Danish artist Mie Olise makes large, ramshackle paintings of equally ramshackle dwellings. The creaky buildings and vessels depicted in her exhibition at Samuel Freeman teeter on improbable stilts, sport sagging laundry lines and bear up shakily under drifts of snow.

Executed in a loose, drippy hand, they explore the frailty and disintegration of notions of “home.”

These themes are echoed in Olise’s textile works: a series of hammocks in which the long ropes serve as the warp for a patchwork of fabrics, including canvas and what looks like chenille.

The larger pieces are draped casually, as if windswept, across thick white beams leaning at awkward angles in the gallery’s open-air courtyard. Although their varied colors and textures are inviting, the hammocks are ruins: provisional resting places knocked down in a storm.

Perhaps because they refer more specifically to real-life structures such as homeless encampments, the hammocks are more successful than the paintings.

Olise’s loose paint handling is perhaps the perfect analog for the provisional nature of the structures she depicts — always on the verge of collapse — but it becomes something of an affectation. While it’s clear that the pictorial surface is also on the verge of dissolving into nonsense, in many passages the elements gel a bit too well, becoming illustrations of frailty rather than embodiments of it.