

# Art in Review

## Shanna Waddell

'Misshapen Chaos of Well-seeming Forms!'

Thomas Erben Gallery  
526 West 26th Street  
Chelsea  
Through March 19

In her first solo gallery show Shanna Waddell, a recent graduate of the Tyler School of Art's M.F.A. program, forges a confident style best described as post-apocalyptic and post-Expressionism. Its hallmarks are radioactive colors, corrupted sterile and spiritual imagery, and sheer painterly bravura.

In the strongest painting, "Harold Camping — False Prophet," a skeletal figure at a podium is flanked by colorful stripes and balloons: Francis Bacon's pope at a child's birthday party. (According to the news release Titian's half-veiled cardinal, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, is the actual and less obvious source of inspiration.)

The museum's excellent collection of early American modernism also seems to have made an impact on Ms. Waddell. In several smaller canvases she paints open medicine cabinets with the jagged striations often seen in landscapes by Milton Avery, Arthur Dove and Marsden Hartley.

Another bathroom element, the sink, appears in the larger and looser "Transient Exit"; it spews blood and emits a phosphorescent yellow-and-green halo. In the equally ominous "Woman Peering Into Atomic Nuclear Illusionistic Space," a heroine wearing goggles and a full skirt bravely approaches a cubelike mushroom cloud.

There's a twitchy, unsettled quality to Ms. Waddell's painting, which lends itself well to the subjects in this show but makes you wonder what's next for her.

KAREN ROSENBERG



THOMAS ERBEN GALLERY

"Medicine Cabinet Altarpiece 2" (2010), on view in Shanna Waddell's solo show at Thomas Erben Gallery in Chelsea.