

## EMILY PAYNE: Full Circle

September 1 through October 15, 2011

Reception for the Artist: Saturday, September 17, 6 to 8pm



Born in Mill Valley, a woodsy enclave north of San Francisco, Emily Payne remembers a sculpture by Ruth Asawa that hung in her parents' study. "I recall being struck by a photograph we had of her building one of her wire hanging pieces on her studio floor, surrounded by three of her six children." Like Asawa, Emily Payne creates drawings out of wire. When she sits down in her studio to make a work of art, she is not just interacting with her materials. She is considering everything. She is concerned with how the work will occupy space or appear to contain it. She is concerned with how angles of light might create shadows and how she can incorporate the shadows into the experience.

Drawing is at the heart of Emily Payne's work. Whether drawing three dimensionally with wire, pencil or the edges of paper, she is concerned with distilled and simplified information and the innumerable ways that objects, even simple objects interact with their environment. Her works are a reduction of items and images to their most simple elements - circles, torn bits of paper, pencil, gouache and pins.

In her Shadow Series, she begins with circles made of wire. She loops the circles to other similar circles to create orbs of various sizes. The orbs hang from seemingly invisible threads and are hung at varying heights in site specific areas. The space is defined and energized by the suspended shapes. They are simple in construction but elegant in presence.

Payne's seed series is similar, but the shapes are "drawn" very differently. By using linear pieces of wire bound tightly on each end, she is able to form oblong rounded shapes. They too look simple - simple in the way a Richard Tuttle looks simple or a Calder circus piece looks simple, but while they do not aim at perfection, there is an instinct that informs them. They "work" in some uncanny way that is immediately appreciated. They are not too precious. They are simply allowed to be themselves. Like Tuttle, Payne is not interested in grand objects, but in everyday things. She is fascinated with dustbins and pinwheels. She likes the outlines and shapes of things. She likes taking them apart and recreating them in an effort to get down to the essence of the thing.

The Donna Seager Gallery, in addition to site specific wire installations and works on paper, presents a new series of wire studies. These wire pieces have transparent skins, some created from the scraped and disassembled covers of books. The hollowed wire frameworks are incredibly reactive to light. If you have ever shown a flashlight under your fingers and watched the rosy glow that happens and remember how fascinating that was to you as a kid, it is something akin to that. The forms themselves are alluring and seem to be something completely natural that we have never seen before.

Works on paper also appear in the exhibition and In the Basin Series, once again, Payne reduces images to their simplest elements. By filtering out all unnecessary information, she allows layers of color and the edges of things to form the drawing line. Even in her two dimensional works, she leaves them organized but "unfettered". By using pins to install them to their backing, air can still flow around them, giving them a lightness of being, a whispered but certain identity.

Whether she is creating abstract assemblages made from the skins of discarded books or hanging installations of suspended wire, Emily Payne has a very refined aesthetic that remains consistent throughout her body of work. If artists create a lens through which we view the world differently, the Emily Payne lens is a look at the subtler effects of air and light on everything we see.