



On View

Now You Can Dance All Over Sarah Cain's Stunning, 70-Piece Floor Mural

Walk this way.

Sarah Cascone, September 22, 2016

A riot of color greets visitors at New York's Galerie Lelong, home to Sarah Cain's new exhibition "Dark Matter" (September 8–October 15). In addition to wall paintings, Cain has expanded the usual scope of the gallery show by creating a massive, 70-piece floor mural that stretches across the whole space.

Originally, Cain wasn't planning to cover the entire floor, but when she proposed expanding the scope of the project, "I thought, let's not make half of a gesture!" gallery vice president Mary Sabbatino told artnet News at the exhibition opening earlier this month.

The floor painting is more in keeping with her earlier site-specific work, but Cain has never made one on this scale before, she tells artnet News. (The gallery gives the official size at 2,500 square feet, but Cain claims that doesn't account for an additional 500 square feet in the lobby.)

"To me it's really funny, this giant masterpiece and hundreds of people walk on it," Cain admitted. "There's this humorous defacement."



Installation view, "Sarah Cain: Dark Matter," Galerie Lelong, New York, September 8–October 15, 2016. Courtesy of Galerie Lelong, New York.

Altogether, it took Cain three weeks of 10-plus hour days (with "lots of chocolate and loud music and ice cream breaks") to bring her vision to life, plus four days of installation at the gallery. What she didn't expect is that the final installation "has this crazy two- or three-foot red glow" where the floor meets the white gallery walls. "There's a vibrancy to it," she added.

The floor is for sale, and is a mix-and-match affair that is designed to be moved to a new location. At the gallery, Cain has placed the panels in long matching stripes, but she envisions reconfiguring them in an equally-beautiful "crazy quilt."

Though Cain's colorful paintings can feel cheerful, she told us that she often works "out of a place of angst," and that the finished pieces represent the resolution she reached through her art. This contrast is part of the reason she was drawn to the exhibition title, which she has been toying with using for about a decade.

"[Dark matter is] out there and light doesn't penetrate through it. It's the unknown out there that's effecting everything," said Cain. "That's very much how I paint."

"Sarah Cain: Dark Matter" is on view at Galerie Lelong, 528 West 26th Street, September 8–October 15, 2016.