

CALENDAR

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THE GALLERIES

DOWNTOWN

According to her resume, a current show of Michele Roberts' paintings, drawings and monoprints is her first solo exhibition since graduating from UC Santa Cruz and Art Center. It's a spirited beginning.

Roberts' visions and storytelling talents take shape in effervescent artworks that give extroverted form to introverted content. Yellow horses, pink-suited men, and yapping dogs are among the characters drawn or painted with heavy dark outlines and filled in with soft-edged, glowing pigment.

She draws heavily from sources as widespread as Franz Marc's expressionistic animals, Keith Haring's pictographic images and the patterned borders of folk art, but her art's content seems to revolve around personally contrived narratives that require explanation. Without it, we simply see stagelike sets and cross sections of houses containing figures and animals. Black, reclining figures seem to allude to death and a painting called "The Universe" depicts two men in combat, but the general tone of this art is so young and hopeful that ominous aspects waft away as the stuff of fantasy. (Jennifer Dumas Gallery, 756 S. Spring St., to July 16.)

—S.M.