

## Views of America, views from Poland

By Lauren Viera, Tribune reporter

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### Justyna Adamczyk at EC Gallery

There's nothing quite as refreshing as stumbling upon the work of a bright, young artist who's never before been exhibited in the U.S., especially with perfectly cheery images that offer an instant antidote to a subfreezing, snow-blistered afternoon.

This small collection of new works of Polish painter Justyna Adamczyk is all light and breathy and free, achieved in both her straightforward use of simple materials (acrylic paints; ecru, thinly bound linen canvases) and the lightness of her hand. There is color — sometimes quite a bit, sometimes rather faint — but mostly, there is whitespace, and with it, room for the images to breathe.

Most of Adamczyk's paintings are fantastically abstract, but a handful look like ghostly portraits. "Pale" (2009) is all lipstick: the double-blot of candy-colored lips that practically float in the middle of the canvas look almost as if Adamczyk herself might have leaned forward and planted them there. "Sztukas" (2009) is the most illustrative of the eight on display here. Puffy clouds are painted on an aqua-blue sky just big enough to hold them; below is a lovely, jellyfish-like mess of neatly painted vines and curlicues.

There are visible pencil strokes on several of these canvases, which at first I wrote off to sloppiness, but they come into play in works like "Seriously ..." (2009), the starkest of the lot. There's a bare silhouette of gray with a thought-bubble burst of black above, seeping into this ghost-figure's brain. Below, hundreds of tiny, penciled-in exes begin to form the torso. It's intriguing, to be sure, and beautiful.

*Justyna Adamczyk at EC Gallery, 215 N. Aberdeen St.,  
312-850-0924; **ec-gallery.com**; through Feb. 13*

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