

MEANINGFUL EXPRESSION

Los Angeles artist
Brenna Youngblood
stands out in an era of
often-tenuous creation.

BY MAXWELL WILLIAMS



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—Brenna Youngblood

In this epoch of art that often seems to lack substance and authenticity, finding a painter with both is beyond rare. Los Angeles-based artist Brenna Youngblood may work with abstraction through mixed-media, but there's a generous point to it all—that art, through the use of veiled-yet-recognizable imagery, can elicit a different emotional response from each viewer.

"I utilize signage, photographs of sinks, light switches and at times the actual physical object," says Youngblood, who has been one of L.A.'s most monitored artists after making waves during the 2012 Made in L.A. biennial. "They predominate my work because of their familiarity. These utilitarian devices surround us, collect history, and many have become iconographic images."

The application of earthen tones and distressed, corticated surfaces give her paintings a provincial quality, although Youngblood works in the metropolitan environs of downtown. "I grew up around those colors, so I suppose that's why they are so prominent in my work," says Youngblood, who was born in nearby Riverside in 1979, and received an MFA from UCLA in 2006. "I love making works that are heavily layered and broken down so that each layer is revealed—similar to sediment."

Youngblood, whose work was recently acquired by the Museum of Contemporary Art and had a solo exhibition, "A Phrase that Fits," at the Tilton Gallery in New York in the spring, currently has a solo museum exhibition, "Loss Prevention"—a mix of new and old works—at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis through June 22.