

Helfand, Glen, "Ingrid Calame: Monterey Museum of Art, La Mirada," *Artforum* February 2011.

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Contours of stains, splotches, and cracks lifted from concrete floor and asphalt pavement form a consistent foundation of Ingrid Calame's work; its success is also rooted in the links it creates between one unlikely site and another. *Perry Street Projects Wading Pool, Buffalo, New York #2*, 2010, the grand, understated wall drawing at the heart of this exhibition, is a vast transcription of the cracks in an arid swimming pool at an ill-fated Buffalo housing project. As always, Calame tilts her horizontal subject matter upward to reorient its meaning. Here, by applying blue and red powdered pigments through an intricate template of pinpricked holes, she communicates an undeniable corporeality, a smudgy web of veins. The work's overall paleness poetically indicts the anemic state of American urbanity.

A smaller version of the piece was installed last fall at James Cohan Gallery in New York; there, it strained the emphatic edges of the white cube and invoked Sol LeWitt's line-intensive wall works. Befitting its West Coast site, this enlarged Monterey edition relaxes, seemingly organically, on an expansive wall in a gallery with the airy spaciousness of a California mission. The chapel-like setting intensifies the meditative power of the large-scale drawing.

There's a contrasting Pop vibrancy to the accompanying drawings and oil paintings, their patterns derived from loading dock floors of a former Bethlehem Steel plant, also in Buffalo. These more colorful works diverge from Calame's familiar use of what deceptively seems like abstraction—her lines and forms are actually literal representations of her sites—to include legibly stenciled numbers from the abandoned factory floor. The distressed numerals are arranged at various angles, in palettes recalling Gerhard Richter's 1980s smear paintings and a dash of *Miami Vice*, or Jasper Johns's sober number paintings merged with zany Memphis furniture. Those energetic juxtapositions generate sparks that suggest Calame continues to find plenty of inspiration on the ground.