

The New York Times

Josephine Halvorson

'Facings'

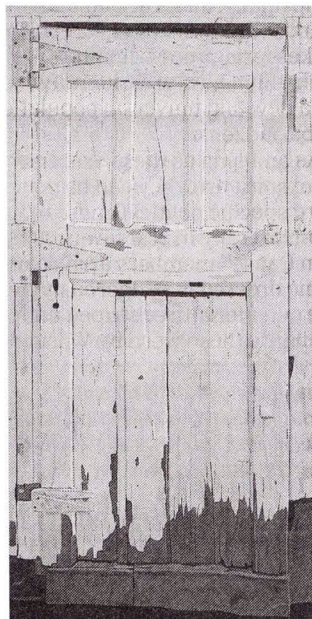
Burt Barr

*Sikkema Jenkins & Company
530 West 22nd Street, Chelsea
Through March 1*

Josephine Halvorson plays adroitly with painting's essential conflation of material fact and immaterial illusion. Eight of the 11 works in exhibition shows parts of old rural buildings. In each the subject is something flat, frontal and weathered: a window frame filled in by an opaque panel; sections of clapboard walls, a set of rusty steel doors.

The flaking white paint of "Woodshed Door" evinces years of exposure to the elements. From a distance the image appears strikingly real. Up close you discover a surprising degree of simplification. Working with generously loaded brushes, Ms. Halvorson abbreviates details in a way that makes the viewer as aware of the viscous paint as of what it describes. It's a tricky balancing act between abstraction and trompe l'oeil realism performed with admirable finesse.

There's a curiously mourn-



SIKKEMA JENKINS & COMPANY, NEW YORK

The thick layers of paint predominate in Josephine Halvorson's images like "Woodshed Door."

ful psychological dimension, too. The images draw you close yet deny entry, suggesting simultaneously a desire to be known and a fear of invasion. Three paintings represent smoldering ashes in a wood-burning stove. They're not as effectively realistic as the others, but they're poignant: the fires are dying, as if from neglect. That enigmatic emotional aspect makes Ms. Halvorson's works more than just clever exercises in painterly realism.

It's interesting to compare Ms. Halvorson's work with the three deftly economical video loops by Burt Barr. Each represents a moving surface: swirling river water; the tread of a car tire rolling toward the viewer; and a scrolling brick wall. Mr. Barr, too, plays tantalizingly with what you see and what you don't.

KEN JOHNSON



SIKKEMA JENKINS & COMPANY, NEW YORK

Burt Barr's silent video of tire treads rolling toward the viewer is one of three shown together at Sikkema Jenkins & Company.

Johnson, Ken. "Josephine Halvorson 'Facings' - Burt Barr." *New York Times* 14 Feb. 2014: C 30.