

In the Galleries

By Alan G. Artner | Tribune critic
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For 15 years **Julia Fish** has created art directly related to her home environment. Lest anyone unfamiliar with the work should think it is in the line of the domestic *bonheur*, or contentment, that comes from Edouard Vuillard and Pierre Bonnard, I immediately should say Fish's art proceeds from decorative motifs in the home—tiles, wood—or room floor plans. She is not a representational painter interested in setting down any of the patterns of life that go on there.

A group of gouaches from 2006 and 2007 at the Rhona Hoffman Gallery addresses stairways and landings. So the home once more presents the artist with shapes that she presumably sees as more interesting than any she could invent. Her "profiles" of a few steps from each of two staircases—one slightly less spare than the other—are very slight indeed. But then she combines them and goes on to treat the landings in the same (brown and green) colors, and these pieces, while minimal, have a gravity and poise out of all proportion to their sources.

This is work of small refinements and adjustments. The world of everyday things generates it, but Fish's qualities of seeing and touch elevate the things to a plane on which they leave behind their humble character. For those attuned, it is something special in both its impulse and realization.

At 118 N. Peoria St., through May 22. 312-455-1990.