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ART Jane Dickson at Valentine Gallery

Posted by [Paul D'Agostino](#) on Tue, Apr 10, 2012 at 4:48 PM



Jane Dickson's new series of post-boom- and/or mid-bust-inspired paintings currently on view at **Valentine Gallery** are stilled and distilled visions of distraction, trumped-up attractions and instability. The artist has long taken depictive cues from various hallmarks of American culture, and Las Vegas is her muse in this body of work—the Las Vegas of 2009–2010, that is, when the town's casinos were anything but exuberantly, bling-blingly abustle.

In *Eat Slots, Play Free*, Dickson's exploitation of the trappings of indulgence and overindulgence are properly counter-exploitatively indulgent. Her compositions are ponderous in their at times predominantly deeper hues and settings, then almost alarming with well selected fluorescents. The arrangement of works on the walls enhances this effect, in a way, for the largely linear layout has something of the staid regularity of slot machines, or of the images and numbers turning up thereupon, such that the flashing oranges, popping yellows and vibrant greens become quite nearly audible.



As both side-note and not:

During my one pass-through visit to Las Vegas as part of a very long road trip several years ago, I witnessed a very elderly man in an electric wheelchair exit a casino and cross a street in what seemed to be slow motion, ostensibly en route to another casino. Quite awkwardly attached to his chair was an oxygen tank strapped to his nose, enabling him to breathe as he puffed on the cigarette dangling from his lips. This vision will stick with me for quite a while as a metaphor for an almost counter-intuitive city that seems to sustain itself awfully similarly.

Dickson's paintings, sobering enough without plunging too deeply into statements or critique, offer a rather different view—one that is, at the very least, extremely more pleasant to recall.

To go have a look is less to gamble than to win. So simply go see, as such, and you will.

Valentine Gallery is located at 464 Seneca Ave, in Ridgewood. Eat Slots, Play Free is on view through April 15th.

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