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NOV 02, 2018

ART, WENT THERE

WENT THERE: SURFACE CONSUMPTION AT GALLERY 263

FINDING EQUILIBRIUM IN EXPRESSION

BY MARYAM RAAD

There is something unspeakably terrifying about letting go. Without deliberateness, words flowing on a page -or paint on a canvas- result in a vulnerable and wild thing. An imperfect beast that reveals too much. When every line, color, and stitch is precise, there is safety. When you rule the canvas, you control what everyone sees, even if it lacks rawness. In the process of creating, this artistic cognitive dissonance transforms into a stagnating block.

With an unparalleled level of self-awareness, Lisa Kellner's artwork explores the particular struggle between running wild and restraint. In a serene Cambridge corner, Gallery 263 is currently home to the artist's latest exhibition, *Surface Consumption*. Kellner's painting, embroidery, and sculpture seek unity within the volatile relationship between control and chaos.



THE \$*&% WENT DOWN! | OIL, SYNTHETIC POLYMER, EMBROIDERED
THREAD ON SILK ORGANZA OVER WOOD

The \$&% Went Down!*, as with many of Kellner's pieces, juxtaposes geometric and organic layers. In this particular piece, the surface is a wild element, with its bright colors and unique patterns. It almost looks like a lively coral reef. From up close, the shapes and colors are meticulously painted and stitched, which Kellner says mimic the stems under a hydrangea flower that she had cut from her own yard. The bottom layer of the piece is the antithesis to the front- colorless and behaved. As light hits the piece, the wild entangled shapes of the front cast a shadow on the panels. Although the two layers seem individuated, the shadow becomes a part of the piece as it forces the two layers to interact with one another. Similarly, the surface never fully hides the panels or the whiteness. These two seemingly incompatible parts create a well-balanced whole in which both the untamed and tamed coexist.



EMBRACE ME | PIGMENT, ACRYLIC, OIL, PLASTER, RESIN, INK, SILK,
COPPER, METAL, PAPER

Kellner breathes life into *Embrace Me* by creating a likeness to lungs inside of a ribcage. The bony white structure protects but it can also constrict, becoming an overbearing cage for whatever it holds. Hollow and airy, the beautiful silk represents the more chaotic side of this piece. The silk manifests its own duality- freedom versus a complete loss of control. Some parts of the silk are inhaling beyond the bones, protruding outside the boundaries. However, the white and more solid structure keeps the silk in check, literally embracing it. There is a push and pull, or rather an inhale and exhale encased in this particular piece. Kellner achieves equilibrium by balancing freedom and protection.





SLICK WILLIE | SPRAY PAINT, OIL, ACRYLIC, EMBROIDERED
THREAD ON SILK OVER WOOD WITH RECESSED WOOD
STRUCTURES

Kellner indicated that *Slick Willie* is one of her more experimental pieces. She describes playing around with spray paint on silkscreen, enjoying the paint's opacity in different lighting. In contrast, the black acrylic paint is completely covering the bottom of the piece. While the spraypaint is more fluid, the black almost resembles solid rocks- strong, heavy, and bold. Kellner's use of transparency plays into the idea of the *surface* being *consumed*. When what's below is covered, there seems to be superficiality and inauthenticity. Again, the white panels are still only partially covered, therefore inseparable from its organic counterpart. Perhaps *Slick Willie* explores the boldness of the surface and how it can never fully get rid of the reality underneath. Or the surface's wild behavior and how it's kept in check by the simplicity inside.





DISPERSE | SILK, SYNTHETIC POLYMER, ENAMEL ON WOOD

Thematically, *Disperse* keeps the white panels but changes the context of their existence. Instead of being combined with the silkscreen, they have become disparate components. There is no longer unity in the sense of a physically connected piece, but perhaps their separation brings a different kind of unity. If both parts are on the surface, then nothing is being hidden and superficiality dissolves. The wooden panels have embraced the wild, relaxed and unevenly spaced leaning against the wall. The silkscreen has embraced the colors of the panels while still maintaining a pink aspect and unruly shapes. Maybe their division has led to compensation or even understanding of one another. Either way, chaos and control must always exist together- neither can be hidden.

Cognitive dissonance and the fear of lacking control is something Kellner herself grapples with as an artist. There is an urge for perfection in her art that she finds restrictive. In *Surface Consumption*, she embraces both her wild and precise side, turning opposites into partners in creation.

Surface Consumption will be held at Gallery 263 until November 10, 2018. (And I strongly urge you to visit and explore these wonderful works of art for yourself!)

For more information:

[Lisa Kellner](#)

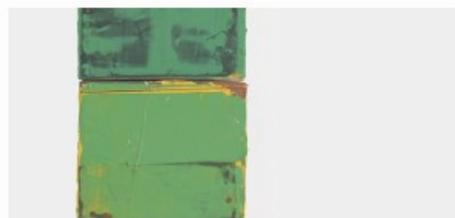
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