

Light Liminal & Wayson R. Jones

Mark Jenkins, *Washington Post*, March 15, 2019

Regrouped with new members every two years, Sparkplug is the District of Columbia Arts Center's visual-arts collective. "Light Liminal" introduces the latest lineup, whose 10 members work in almost that many media. Much of the art is in shades of gray, which makes for an ironic contrast with the adjacent show by Wayson R. Jones, a painter who has just moved from black-and-white to sensuous color.

The illumination in "Light Liminal" can be electric, as in Steve Wanna's LED-outfitted circles of synthetic wax, molded into sculptural coils. It might be captured at an exact moment, as in Alexandra Silverthorne's chiaroscuro photo of an old house at night. Or it could be implied by the juxtaposition of hard black lines and soft gray washes in Azadeh Sahraeian's drawings. Several of these artists work with fabric. Sarah J. Hull aligns rows of silk and cotton to resemble a minimalist drawing, and Madeline A. Stratton arranges lengths of dyed chiffon in a sort of stripe painting. Shana Kohnstamm gives more organic forms to pieces of hand-dyed wool, wired together to suggest fantastic flora and fauna. Her pieces don't belong on the gray scale.

Jones's "Lush: Reinvention" is in DCAC's Nano Gallery, designed for small-scale pieces. The Maryland artist is showing a half-dozen abstractions, each six-inch square. They're studies in contrast, opposing such pairs as red and black or blue and yellow. Made of paint and pumice gel, the pictures are thickly layered, so that the complementary hues may ride on top, lurk around the edges or peek from below. The hot colors are immediately alluring, but the paintings also reward close, lingering inspection.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/in-the-galleries-hanging-garments-symbolize-violence-against-indigenous-women/2019/03/15/b691cac2-4428-11e9-aaf8-4512a6fe3439_story.html

Methods

Mark Jenkins, *Washington Post*, October 15, 2017

The show at Brentwood Arts Exchange is titled "Methods," but it could have been dubbed "Materials." Found objects and rough-edged assemblage are central to the four artists' styles. Roxana Alger Geffen makes vivid combine-paintings that sometimes defy the shape of the rectangular canvases. Chanel Compton assembles bits of white paper that are both affixed and colored with wine. Rodrigo Carazas juxtaposes building materials with such found objects as a policeman's cap.

The most minimalist of the troupe is Wayson R. Jones, whose mostly black pieces emphasize texture over color. Mixing feathers with pigment and powdered graphite, the artist makes dark voids varied by their thickly thatched surfaces. Like the other “Methods” actors, Jones makes art that’s raw and unexpected.

Seeing Through the Lens of Black America

Angela Carroll, *Bmore Art*, June 29, 2016

“Wayson Jones’ Black President Series is a collection of five acrylic, gesso and powdered graphite canvases. Jones created the works as a ‘reaction to the extremity of backlash of President Barack Obama’s election.’ The [works] are figural, distorted, meta-abstractions that activate white, black and gray values in subtly disturbing ways. The hypnagogic forms that emerge from densely layered palette knife strokes explode and contort on the canvas. The series’ blatant black, white and gray palette elicits the polarized and schizophrenic theater of American politics. Like a rorschach ink blot, the impressions are defined by the psyche of the viewer. Where one patron saw a screaming face, another saw clusters of frenzied orbital atoms. Like life imitating art imitating batshit crazy political rhetoric, the Black President series visualizes the angst and cacophony of our times.”

Confronting Race, Violence Through Art at Galerie Myrtis

Tim Smith, *Baltimore Sun*, June 23, 2016

“Wayson R. Jones’ ‘Black President’ (2012), an abstract portrait on canvas incorporating powdered graphite, acrylic medium and gesso...seems to bristle with conflict, internal and external.”

Spins on ‘The Starry Night,’ From Critical to Cheeky

Mark Jenkins, *Washington Post*, May 20, 2016

“One of the starkest and most striking contributions is Wayson R. Jones’s near-abstract ‘Giant Angry Stars,’ rendered in grainy black-and-white.”