

*Hanging Paper*

Olive DeLuce Gallery at Northwest Missouri State University

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***In Pursuit of Possibilities: Garry Noland and Laura Nugent***

by Kimberly Kitada

An abundance of color, patterning, and richness greets the viewer. Artists Laura Nugent and Garry Noland are unabashed in their use of color; this presentation of new work is not muted or understated but rather, pure and dynamic. Nugent describes color as the “hero protagonist” and this large-scale installation is an ode to color, site, and material process.

Laura Nugent’s work has developed gradually to an immense scale. Some earlier series of work, such as *Small Bodies* (2020-2022) and *Changing Bodies* (2020-2022) occupied a finite surface or custom-sized wood panel. Now in their present form, the paintings proliferate and intensify in their scale, overlapping and stretching onto one another. The unconventional forms and saturated colors evoke some shades of the painter Elizabeth Murray. In the artist’s process, pattern is the starting point. The patterns extend and repeat to cover the surface entirely. For her new, site-specific installations *How Many Units in a Double Pink Gin* (2024) and *The Highway* (2024), Nugent re-used scrap materials given to her by other artists, which include Tyvek, canvas, and paper. This idea of accumulation, and specifically the use of component parts to make a whole, emerges in Noland’s practice as well.

Garry Noland’s practice is fluid and intuitive. As he works among the media of collage, sculpture, and painting in their various modalities, he is continually open to the process and staying in the moment. In the artwork *Yakkety-Yak* (2024), forms reveal themselves in both the positive space and negative space. The striking manifestations of color and shape formally bring to mind an Henri Matisse cut-out. For the newly-created, large-scale work *Denmark Overcoat* (2024), Noland adds pure color swatches using an acrylic, latex, and baking soda mixture onto a paper substrate. Each paper component receives a thin layer of glue and is affixed into the larger composition of colored chips. Through this repetitive process of painting, cutting, and adhering, the artist finds solace in repetitive nature of common labor.

In his artistic process, Noland articulated that he does not have a plan about what goes where. From a similar perspective, Nugent engages in an improvisational

exercise of creating patterns and overlapping areas of the installation. Both artists use their material knowledge to investigate the possibilities of works on paper—where are its boundaries and edges? Which colors complement and harmonize with one another? When the artist accumulates layers upon layers, when is the work complete? The exhibition *Hanging Paper* poses these questions to the viewers, and these inquiries do not have a straightforward answer. Many artists embark on these particular material explorations for decades. This exhibition demonstrates that art-making is a lifelong pursuit. Both Garry Noland and Laura Nugent are open to being transformed by the process of making, and in this way, to learn and to teach others about their artistic production.