

PUSHING COLOR TO THE CUSP OF RECOGNITION: THREE QUESTIONS WITH DAVID RYAN



Kristen Peterson Wed, Dec 17, 2014 (6:17 p.m.)

Artist David Ryan is known for his playful multilayered wall constructions comprising robust color combinations and lyrical lines. Whistle-clean and methodically fabricated, the abstract sculptural paintings are clever interactions of line, shape and color, whether made using Coraform, MDF or felt.

But in his first Las Vegas solo show, the Texas-born artist—who came to UNLV to study with Dave Hickey and received his MFA in 2003—presents something slightly different: works on paper with expanded PVC. By installing his own milling machine in his studio, he's been able to fabricate in-house, allowing him the flexibility to respond immediately to the mark making.

We talked with the Las Vegas artist, who is represented by Culver City's Mark Moore Gallery. Locally, his work has been shown in collections at the Smith Center and the Barrick Museum. One of his recent works was featured in a group exhibit at the Contemporary Arts Center, curated by Matthew Couper. His self-titled show is at Michele C. Quinn Fine Art Advisory through January 29.

KP: How did you come into your style of work?

DR: It was a progression from my early interests in painting and in the layering of visual information. What began as representational abstractions evolved into paintings completely devoid of recognizable subject matter. I chose this refinement of form, color and line to describe my engagement with the world by physically layering forms atop one another. This allowed me to conceal as much as I revealed. My clumsy approach to utilizing technology embedded the artist's mark within an otherwise polished object.

KP: And the works at MCQ?

DR: The works at MCQ evolved similarly. They start with physically spreading paint across paper in a somewhat random approach. These marks are photographed and responded to digitally at 1:1 scale on the computer. Mouse-aided hand-drawn lines interact with the initial mark but also define edges of thinly layered sheets of expanded PVC. Each layer is painted separately and glued together into a singular object. An object which simultaneously documents the initial gesture and the subsequent response to it.

KP: What about your approach to color?

DR: My approach to color is simply utilizing interesting relationships I find in the world and marrying them to form. I often push my colors to the cusp of recognition so they feel as if they're mutating into another color. It's a way to balance the discrete shapes with an analog sensibility.

David Ryan
Through January 29, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Michele C. Quinn Fine Art Advisory
620 S. Seventh Street
702-366-9339