



He said Surprise and Then He Started Shooting by Steven Pearson

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: "Compulsory Measures"
Where: International Museum of Art & Science, 1900 Nolana
When: December 22, 2019-May 3, 2020
Hours: 9am-3pm Tues-Wed-Thurs, 9am-5pm Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, 1-5pm Sun
9am-8pm on first Thursdays
Contact: (956) 682-0123 or ww.imasonline.org
Regular admission applies except \$1.00 per person for WIC and EBT cardholders, free Sundays

Into Obsessions and Compulsions

Over thirty artworks of varying mediums offer an insightful experience to gallery-goers.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

In these emotionally turbulent times, "Compulsory Measures" at IMAS wants to lure us into a state of calm through its art. News sources, social media, and rampant consumerism has triggered excessive anxiety across most demographics, and artists, sensitive to the zeitgeist of their time, have been channeling quite a bit of fear and anxiety into their art over the past few years. Eight artists in "Compulsory Measures" want to offer a contemplative slowing down. Their works speak of quiet obsessive-compulsive measures, although some still leak pressing issues facing civilization today. Over thirty artworks of varying mediums offer a total experience.

This exhibition was inspired by an academic southeastern art panel discussing "Obsessive Compulsive Disorder vs Organized Chaos Delivers" co-chaired by two of the participating artists.

The works in this show reflect that theme with complex pattern repetition and obsessive investigation of materials. At first glance, this exhibition in the Cardenas Gallery seems slow due to its theme; works that speak more of control through obsessive repetition are grouped near the entrance and invite leisurely perusal. A series of four small paintings by Reni Gower repeat equally scaled circular shapes upon grids comprised of narrow rectangles; its dynamics involve vivid non-repetitive color combinations. These paintings can quickly focus the agitated mind. Nearby, Joan Elliott's four panels offer a more tightly controlled geometry. Her mandala-like images act as radiant structures. Some are still and contemplative, others subtly pulsate with kaleidoscopic energy, as in "Canyon." Many of her paintings provide an organic base by beginning with landscape imagery, then her designs intertwine, create pathways, and capture shapes that recede, float, or compress space, presenting a continuous rhythm. Jennifer Printz's small horizontal drawings are meditations with the sky; somber hues of clouds, dark shapes, and sky are superimposed or reconnected to create new realities.

Other works leave the comfort of this purely meditative state. The larger works of Kristy Deetz and Al Denyer vacillate between the normal and the maybe not. "I create illusions that confuse space and subject," stated Denyer. Her complex linear drawing, "Terrain II", evokes an uneasy questioning of what it might mean. From a distance it could be a pattern on a rock, but close up, is it a city map used to trace the unimaginable? "Reciprocity of the Fold" by Deetz also suggests a chaotic duality – wrinkled fabric shares a surface with a paradigm of order, traces of creased folds. The drawings of Steven Pearson initially appear to relate to the semi-controlled dichotomies of Deetz and Denyer, but although his drawings contain controlled and seemingly uncontrolled elements, Pearson demonstrates the fine line between anxiety and terror with clear messaging, as in the drawing, "He Said Surprise and Then He Started Shooting". His social reference pushes us firmly over that edge.

Stating that "My works are metaphorical maps of change, perishing, and memory", the compositional contrasts in Tanja Softic's paintings on paper emit a strangely wistful foreboding. There is reassurance in her repetitions, but the images speak of hopelessness. The dark abstract shape in "Future of Secrets" floats against a space, full of lines and tones, that feels empty. On the unrestricted foreground, precisely drawn pouring-bowls slowly spill their contents; there is no stopping this inevitable flow. And the drawing, "Gathered from Available Data" tells us that there is nowhere to hide from technology.

"Compulsory Measures" is a thought-provoking exhibition with a general appeal. The visual power to both calm and quietly disturb fuels this exhibition.

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