

Laluyan, Oscar A., "Shaun O'Dell: Random Acts of Unique Rhythms", ARTEFUSE, 26 December 2012.

Shaun O'Dell: Random Acts of Unique Rhythms

BY ARTEFUSE ON 12/26/2012 · LEAVE A COMMENT · IN NEW YORK

Viewing the work of Shaun O'Dell at Susan Inglett Gallery last December 20th made me ponder on what the artist refers to as "a purely stochastic process". Searching for what it means, *stochastic* (adj.) 1: RANDOM; specifically; involving a random variable <a stochastic process> 2: Involving chance or probability. *

Did that help clarify anything further? Not really. In finding definition to a word that it proved fruitless as I am forced to just look and observe the paintings of Shaun O'Dell without a compass. Art is a visual experience and O'Dell's oeuvre mitigates that key element of taking it all in whether one starts with a detail or see the total picture itself. Susan Inglett at the gallery related that O'Dell was now veering into showing more abstract work and he had a background as a jazz musician besides being an artist. Only then did I start seeing this stochastic process that the artist has employed with this series. It slowly unfolds in a scatological rhythm and seeing the variants is like listening to a jazz riff. The crest and ebbs in the lines of the canvas are unpredictable or random but it all makes cohesive and tactile sense.

Strips (2012) proved to be one of the more arresting pieces that caught my eye. The black-white horizontal strips on the canvas provided a gradient camouflage background for the pop of yellow and blue vertical strips interlaced in between. This seemingly random injection of an opposing hue and directional element further cements a flux that fuels an inherent energy within the canvas. *Empire Movie (2012)* with its lines mimicking a familiar NYC landmark skyscraper and its pulsing white-black lines briefly made me think of what a monochromatic Piet Mondrian could be. But it is clearly O'Dell making his own rhythms with the lines interlaced and crossing its own traffic beat. Other pieces were just as imbued with this irreverent homage to a process but allowed to form intuitively by the artist. Each is best experienced visually and not to be hung up on the process. It made me look closer and think a little harder. His work can drive one to individually consider its unique sense of rhythm and random touches of brilliance.

Shaun O'Dell's recent works on view pulsate to his jazz musician background. When you listen to – say a Charlie Parker or Dizzy Gillespie – that there is no set flow or pattern but once you let go then allow the jazz riff to ride that you begin to appreciate its unpredictable beauty. The same goes for O'Dell's work – just let go and appreciate such random brilliance that rarely shows on a gallery wall.

(* – definition sourced from Merriam Webster dictionary online)

Shaun O'Dell / On View: December 20, 2012 – February 9, 2013

Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Saturday (10 am – 6 pm)

Susan Inglett Gallery. 522 West 24th Street. NYC, NY 10011

art review and photos by: [Oscar A. Laluyan](#)

installation view and art images from Susan Inglett Gallery courtesy of the artist