

XYLOR JANE: AN EXTRAORDINARY ARTIST WITH A NATIONAL REPUTATION

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Xylor Jane, "Magic Square for Finding Lost People," 2014, oil on panel, 24" x 24", private collection, courtesy Pettit Art Partners, New York.

by Marguerite Serkin

Through the ages, thinkers and mystics have recognized that numbers speak to the order of things, but artistic visual expression of this discreet order has been historically intermittent. Mathematical constructs such as the Fibonacci Sequence and the Golden Ratio appear in a broad spectrum of natural features, including snail shells, beehives, pine cones and our spiral galaxy; yet, their alignment with pure mathematics

remains mysterious and for many, sacred.

Greenfield, Massachusetts-based artist Xylor Jane follows in the footsteps of da Vinci, Dürer, Dali, Juan Gris and Le Corbusier in bringing the magic of numbers into visual form. Jane's selected paintings of "Counterclockwise," on exhibit at the University Museum of Contemporary Art at UMass Amherst, incorporate the perfection of mathematics, coupled with the drama of human interpretation.

Pointillism defines much of Jane's work within an active, shifting tableau. Jane's paintings are often illusory, yet grounded in the layered application of numerical sequencing. The paintings in "Counterclockwise" accentuate the pictorial value of numeric symbols themselves, while celebrating the implied relationships between them.

Jane's formidable painting, "Untitled," ink and oil on panel, 2016, combines rich texture and the meticulously conjured appearance of multiple dimensions on a flat surface to support its literal content. In an expression of nuanced complexity, the piece offers a visceral representation of the celestial, otherworldly implications of pure mathematics.

"Magic Square for Finding Lost People," oil on panel, 2014, holds a mesmerizing array of triangular shapes which shift according to distance and perspective. Rich purples, reds, yellows and blues create a near-tapestry effect, while the numbers themselves hold mystical, yet playful significance. As a true magic square, all numbers added along each line of the square — horizontally, diagonally and vertically — must reach the same total. For Jane, the numbers themselves define the piece.

"I've been painting numbers since 1999," Jane recently shared. "While at the San Francisco Art Institute, one of my work study jobs was in the library and I found several books on sacred geometry and learned to do Islamic design based on division of the circle using only a compass and a straight edge. That was a fortifying plunge into the infinite universe of maths."

"I begin most of my paintings with a grid constructed for the chosen set of numbers," Jane continued. "This requires simple computations and results in a map of the subject. I enjoy the relations of the figure and the ground and much of each painting's exploration of space involves a dance between the two. Interdependence reigns as each phase of paint application births the next," she added.

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