

Art Now L.A.
August 29, 2020

Cook, Herman and Isermann: *Soft Vibrations*
Works Resonating in New Ways
Praz Delavallade Los Angeles
May 16 - September 5, 2020

by Jody Zellen



What makes a group exhibition resonate? In my opinion, a group exhibition has staying power when the relationships between the individual works offer something cumulatively. Often, group shows fall into two categories: those that feature one work by many artists selected to illustrate an idea and those that present an ample selection of works by just a few artists.

Soft Vibrations features works by three artists: Heather Cook, Roger Herman, Jim Isermann. It is a compelling installation that juxtaposes paintings by Isermann, ceramics by Herman and woven works by Cook. Each artist is concerned with pattern and abstraction, yet engages in different materials and processes to achieve their desired results. Isermann's paintings are visual illusions incorporating hard-edged geometry. In *Untitled (yellow 116, orange 1505, red 179, blue 2925)*, 2009, the pattern of concentric rectangles in differing hues of blue, red, yellow and orange causes the canvas to oscillate and appears to be three-dimensional, rather than two. A similar disorientation occurs in *Untitled (orange 21, ochre 124, green 397, red 1788)*, 2009. Here, Isermann creates undulations by layering concentric red squares over wide green and orange stripes that cross the square canvas along the diagonal. The red squares increase and decrease in size to create a sense of movement.

While Isermann's pieces are precise, structured, colorful and kaleidoscopic, Herman's ceramic vessels have a funky, hand-crafted quality. Several smaller glazed ceramic works occupy a shared white pedestal located in the center of the gallery space, while the larger works sit atop individual pedestals. Each work is imbued with areas of modulated glazes in a wide range of colors and textures that in some ways come to resemble three-dimensional Hans Hoffman or other similiar modernist paintings. Herman is an apt colorist with a keen sense of design who excels at creating intriguing and complex surfaces built up through a process of layering.

Cook's woven paintings are subtle and intricate. Her modest sized works are comprised of zig-zagging herringbone patterns in tones of red, blue and gray that span the width of her canvases. At first glance, the pieces appear to be found fabric patterns, but upon closer examination, Cook's hand work is revealed. The images in her *Shadow Weave* series (2020) are a combination of acrylic paint, cotton yarn and canvas. Within each work, there is a fluctuation or interruption to the pattern as if to say the hand has an impact on that which appears manufactured. Within the horizontal black and white striations that make up *Shadow Weave Black (13) + White (14) 8/4 Cotton 15 EPI*, 2020, Cook inserts rectangular shapes with vertical

lines that disrupt the continuity of the surface and add to the intrigue of her creations.

How Cook's, Herman's and Isermann's works play off and inform each other is neither obvious nor intuitive. Through the act of looking and thinking about algorithms, process, patterns and disruptions, these artists' works resonate in new ways when seen in the context of each other.

<https://artnowla.com/2020/08/29/cook-herman-and-isermann-soft-vibrations/>