

Art and Cake, August 5, 2018

B.A.D. Summer at Baik Art
Jonathan Casella, Mark Cooper, Kim Eull
June 15 - September 8, 2018

By Jody Zellen



“B.A.D. Summer” is a collaborative installation that transforms the rectangular adjunct gallery space of Baik Art into a kaleidoscope of sculpted and painted forms. The floor is covered in astroturf. The walls are painted in bright bold geometric patterns. Myriad objects are scattered amongst odd-shaped wooden shelving units. Though curated by Joshua Hashemzadeh, the collaborative nature of the exhibition is the brainchild of Boston based Mark Cooper who has a long history of creating site specific installations that integrate work by other artists.

Cooper’s contributions are floor and wall based sculptural forms pieced together like honeycombs from shaped wood to become tables and shelves. Some of the surfaces are the raw wood while other have been collaged with a patchwork of patterned and colored papers. Nested into the corners and ceiling as well as covering parts of the walls are clusters of decorated paper that have a post-apocalyptic floral quality. Sitting on the floor and on disparate shelves are both sculptural and functional ceramic objects beckoning close observation.

The bright wall mural is a patterned work of interrelated and contrasting lines and shapes created by Los Angeles based painter Jonathan Casella. Casella’s site specific mural becomes a floor to ceiling frieze that explores the language of formal abstraction and the power of bombastic color. Green and white stripes give way to blue dots on an orange background

followed by a composition of yellow, pink and orange lines. Each section is a discreet geometric pattern in varying primary color combinations. When Casella does provide a place for the eye to rest— as in the parts of the wall painted just pink or green toward the back of the space, they are populated by his smaller paintings as well as by framed artworks by Korea based artist Kim Eull.

Eull's works are small, subtle and quiet. Rather than exhibit them traditionally, his images are hung high on the wall or placed in a nook or leaning on a shelf in one of Cooper's sculptures. The quirky mixed media drawings from his "Why My Drawing Comes From The West" series (2003-2013) are quasi narratives depicting cartoon-like figures and personal dream-like scenarios. They stand as in between moments within the frenetic installation.

In many ways Baik Art has been turned into a store with an unconventional display and artist-created shelving. While Cooper and Casella have fabricated a charged and visually dynamic installation, the real focus is on the smaller objects — Eull's drawings, Casella's hand made clocks and Cooper's ceramics — commodities subtly integrated into the greater structure and context.

The juxtaposition of three artists with divergent practices within an installation points to the expansive possibilities of collaboration for both dialogue and influence. Cooper speaks about the sum of the parts being greater than the individual pieces and in this installation, while the individual pieces are appealing, it is really the whole— the immersive space created through collaboration that makes this exhibition exhilarating and unusual, as well as a totally satisfying experience.

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