

Artillery Magazine
Gallery Rounds
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David Korty
Howl
Night Gallery
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By Jody Zellen



David Korty's early works called to mind the paintings of Alex Katz and Luc Tuymans as they flattened space, often depicting people in urban settings to imply narratives. More illustrative and interpretative than didactic or realistic, these works were an immediate draw. In exhibitions at Night Gallery in 2013 and 2016, Korty segued from representation to large-scale abstractions, incorporating drawing, painting and collage. While some figurative elements remained, the paintings were constructed from geometric shapes that referenced but did not define the body.

In *Howl*, Korty has moved further into abstraction. Bright color backgrounds—violet, lavender, blue, green and yellow—are filled with painted as well as collaged elements: black and white rubbings, monoprints and gestural brushstrokes suggesting hands. In each work, these solid backgrounds are framed by or contain a vivid outline that overlaps or intersects with color circles positioned within the composition to suggest cartoony mouse ears (a reference to Mickey or Mini) and rounded noses.

In *Figure on violet with quadruple eyes and two black ears* (all works 2019), two large black painted circles positioned toward the top of the painting are juxtaposed with a collaged rectangle signing for a head, comprised of printed newsprint fragments over which Korty has painted an orange nose and a red oval mouth. Below the quasi-head are black lines that suggest shoulders and smaller dots that sign for shirt buttons. The four eyes are a succession of ovals that infuse the portrait with a sense of movement.

Figure on lavender with orange ears similarly combines geometric shapes and collaged brush strokes that delineate painted word fragments and hands. Two orange circles (the figure's ears) at the top are balanced by two at the bottom of the painting. The lavender background is framed by an edge of bright green at the top and sides. The black circular eyes, orange nose and black rectangular mouth recede to the back as the figure's hand comes forward gesturing "stop."

Korty's canvases are a combination of collaged patterns, ribbon-like squiggles, textual fragments and pointing fingers, juxtaposed with colored circles, to become abstracted figures floating in pure color spaces. The works are variations on a theme and formal experiments, yet resonate as expressionistic personifications of these basic structures. In addition to the paintings, Korty also exhibits a suite of untitled gouache and ink on paper works that more casually yet suggestively combine his palette of cartoony hands, faces and ears.

<https://artillerymag.com/night-gallery-david-korty>