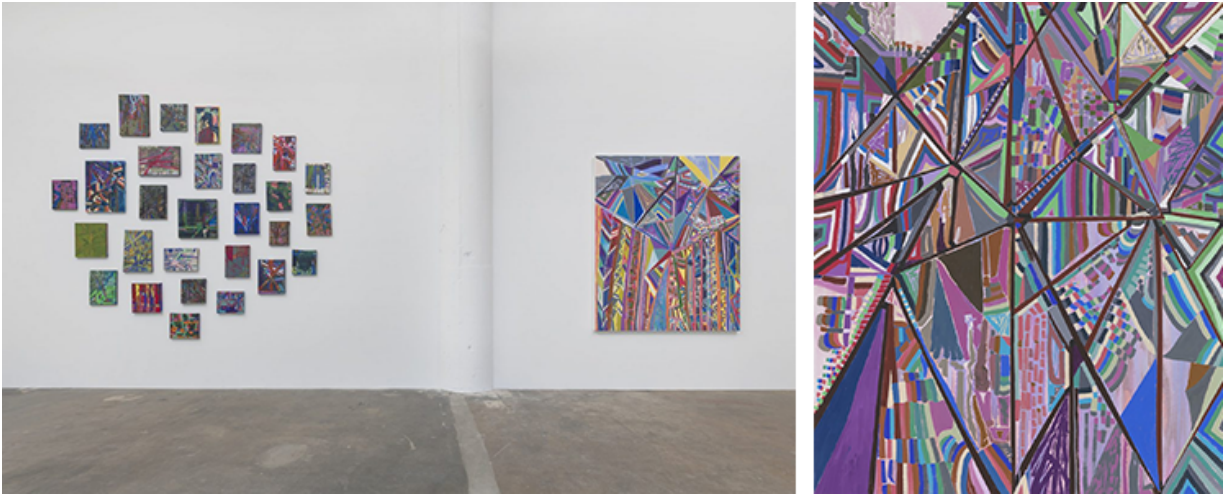


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Myriad Elements Create A Unified Whole

Steve Roden  
*cloud/cloud*  
Vielmetter Los Angeles  
July 13 – August 24, 2019

by Jody Zellen



Steve Roden is a versatile artist who easily flows between different media. His current exhibition at Vielmetter Los Angeles includes both large and small paintings on canvas, projected videos as well as a sound piece.

Often Roden begins with an algorithm or a system he creates and employs to determine a sequence for 'building' his paintings. This algorithm can involve translating sound into patterns and colors as an exploration of the language of mark making. Three acrylic on canvas works, each entitled, *in and in and up and down below (above)*, 2019, are indicative of the push/pull energy that drives Roden's compositions.

These works have a cadence and rhythm as long lines cross the diagonal juxtaposed with shorter strokes of muted colors (pink, purple, deep blue and green) that fill the spaces in between. While the works appear as geometrical abstractions they are rooted in the observable world. Two large paintings, *bandwidth #1* and *bandwidth #2* (2019), are more kaleidoscopic and architectural, as here Roden has added triangular shapes and brighter colors into the mix.

Titles as well as process are important to Roden, so words like bandwidth, cloud and orrery (titles of works in the current exhibition) suggest digital and scientific technologies and direct the interpretation of the work.

In the exhibition, twenty-nine small paintings are hung salon style on a single wall. They could be thought of as fragments— isolated gestures or musical movements extracted from a larger whole— that resonate on their own while simultaneously referencing something beyond. For

example, in *andy's eyes*, 2019, a deep green background is bisected by lighter green lines that zig and zag across the composition separated by orange blobs with purple centers that allude to eyes. Other paintings become abstractions that reference generic cities, buildings, passageways or maps as in the enigmatic *camouflage* or *logan's run* (both 2019).

Central to Roden's practice are sound (implied rhythms), the built environment and collage. His works also take advantage of play and the random juxtaposition of disparate elements. In this exhibition, Roden presents two video works from 2017, *detritus* and *orrery* as a large scale looping projection, whose combined duration is more than 77 minutes. *detritus* is a captivating double screen work, shot from above, where Roden collages fragments culled from vintage copies of the architectural and design periodical, *Domus*. Each collage coalesces on screen for an instant before viewers see Roden's hand enter the frame adding or removing pieces of the torn or cut pages to create an ever-changing composition. Shapes and colors cohere, then dissipate in Roden's exploration of architectural representations as a metaphor for building and the creative process.

Watching Roden construct these collages on the fly is fascinating and offers insight into his process and multi-faceted practice. Numerous times, I wanted to stop the projection to sit longer with his compelling combinations. What is magical about Roden's exhibitions is not only the power of his painted compositions, but how the myriad elements fit together creating a unified whole.

<https://artnowla.com/2019/08/08/steve-roden-could-cloud/>