

New work | Jeanette Fintz | Summer 2013

Highlights from my interview with Jeanette Fintz, working artist and educator at Parsons School for Design, conducted on June 30, 2013 at her Hudson Valley studio. We discuss Jeanette's new body of work in the context of structure, freedom and clarity.



Jeanette Fintz and *Greenlight*



Jeanette Fintz and *Syncope*



Role Play 1 Diptych, 23" x 46"

Responding to the question as to whether my work still deals with contradictions: Yes, but what I am striving for is UNITY by using a grid, which for me right now is an hexagonal grid. It allows me to find pathways that appear to be forming contradictory structures, but actually they are all the same at the base level. So, I call this the "Role Play Series" because it seems as though this is about creation, as if all this were going on at the molecular level. We are all made out of the same units and yet there is an amazing way that units can re-combine, that certain characteristics isolate and manifest - but actually we are all the same. This grid and creating the diagonal division also helped me find a way of working with dichotomies.



First Day of Spring diptych, 22" x 44"

I find that I have a lot of contradictions in my nature and therefore I need to allow that into my working method, allow myself to find different ways of using space, using paint, using tightness and looseness both. This is allowing me to explore lots of things, but giving me a stability that allows me to feel more relaxed when I am starting to work (It's been very exciting and fun. It's just been really fun.)



Roleplay 2 diptych, 23" x 46"

Can you talk about the improvisation in your work?

Once I know what I'm dealing with then I can improvise; I'm going to go from here to there and I'll take this line and I'll follow it it this way, and then what should I do after that? I'll make it up as I go along, but I'm not totally reaching outside of the system.



Greenlight 60" x 72"

Have you thought about going outside the system?

I have thought about including what I used to do, which is pour. Pouring was a way of unifying-- a way of spanning a whole surface with something that was very fluid and I couldn't control it, I had to trust. Now I'm not doing that. I am really clearly saying this

is the edge of the shape, this is the shape that I am allowing myself to find here, and I am going to try to make it work so that it moves, so it does not feel static. In "Greenlight", I chose to make a transparent shape and work with that. The colors are different kinds of greens, lighter greens; the bottom layer is more warm and more ochery and graded in a very systematic way. So "Greenlight" has a step-like transparency, and in "Syncope" I created a transparency of arcs on one side and broken circles on the other side, so it almost gives it a little narrative action .



Syncope 60" x 72"



Roleplay 6, 23" x 23"

Something caught my eye -- These partial shapes and edges.

Those edges are coming from something I did in one of the Role Play paintings. I isolated two rhomboid shapes that are joined by a diamond. It actually refers back to some early Sol Lewitt sculptures, because he worked with the illusion of an open cube, and sometimes it visually flattened and became something else. I chose that shape to work with. I just kept finding them and pulled them out so that they would move across

the whole surface. I wanted them all to be slightly different, yet I wanted them all to connect eventually --*your eye will connect them--*

I was using this very thin cream colored tape to draw the lines and I said, "boy, I like the way that overlaps", liked the way the lines were given more spontaneous drawing effect. It gave it a casualness.

I use tape to draw with a lot, like Mondrian. In "Greenlight" I began to extend off the edges of shapes on one side of the painting; see how it changed the rhythm - instead of it being so smooth, its going to be a little bit more agitated, its going to be a little bit more jagged and it feels like it's about the shape being constructed rather being a fait accompli. I feels like the lines are like twigs, branching, contrasted against the smooth curves on the other side.



Syncope, 60" x 72"

And I love the zig zag ; it is so bold, so strong in here

I was a little frightened about that because I felt like it took over. What I did was put in something equally bold and simple (the transparent arcs) that relates, but pushes the zig zags back, and so now I totally accept them. Those diagonal lines (the zig zag) -- those are extended angles seeming to create another level that joins the first circularly derived layer, and then also possibly falls away from it. So, I get an overlap of two lines--that's something I always liked is the merge/overlap. It reminds me of music where notes get very close --I like where two lines come together and they are really about different spaces but when they join visually, they create this moment that is very mysterious. A fugue structure. You know there's two but they end up joining, especially if they are the same color.

In Syncope, I changed the angle of intersection at the line of division from 120 degrees to a different angle, so it's twisted everything on the left to another direction. And that created this amazing sense of things splitting apart, but being connected to each other, so I liked that about it. And I eventually thought, do I really want to keep the color this simple.... looked and looked at it and said, Yes! I am just going to leave it the way I planned it.

But It has to have space and it does. But just enough so you can find different ways of looking at it--find the curvy way, find the angular way.

So, let me ask you about reconciling the intuitive and the intellectual in your work.

I think that is my struggle just in life, all the way through, in every respect. It never stops.

That is what leads to creativity, you know, those kind of conflicts of things smashing up against one another--they always lead to something that might be interesting, fresh, different.

What I end up thinking that my work is most like, is really anything in which you can identify layers, starting with early music and Bach. When I listen to the Yo Yo Ma cello suites and Glenn Gould's Goldberg variations...I see lines, and that is how it's been for many years--I like to have layers of lines on top of each other and layers of space. I see/hear that in some of the sounds of voice and saxophone in Brazilian music. Then, rhythm is a very strong force - I love Indian ragas and Latin rhythms. My work always has had rhythm. Even when I did my early landscapes, there was a lot of rhythm in them, in the brushwork. What I listen to now is Kirtan music, meditation music mostly, all day. Its very soothing to me and *it gets rid of the static--which is beginning to show up in the work because its clearer.* Also I listen to Led Zeppelin, but that's when I need that energy burst.

What about ever returning to landscape painting or representational work?

I don't know, I can't predict. I always look at landscape and imagine what I would do with it if I were painting it. So I look at it and I enjoy, very much. I am very attached to it-- color especially, and I learn from it every day. I always look at the light and colors and thinking if I had the time...

when I get to be very old....but I don't know when that's ever going to happen.

That's never going to happen....

Annette Benda Fox

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