



“SF artist Heather Day hangs her first NYC exhibition”

Anna Volpicelli / January 24, 2019



New York City has been graced with the art of San Francisco's own Heather Day before; last November, the Dogpatch-based painter executed a large-scale, in situ mural for Google's Hardware Store holiday pop-up in Soho.

And since one door often has a way of opening another, Day returns to Manhattan this week for the Thursday opening of her first exhibition in that city, at Chelsea's Joshua Liner Gallery.

Titled *Pour*, the exhibit—in collaboration with Toronto-based artist Kathryn Macnaughton, is a "nod to the dynamic, experimental approach Kathryn and I both take when painting," says Day. "We pour and push paint across the canvas—it's a physical, almost kinetic process."

On display are new works that Day painted in December 2018 during a residency at the Macedonia Institute in the Hudson Valley. Casual admirers of her abstract pieces will recognize her signature style and color palette, but those closer to the artist and her process will see this show as an evolution for Day, who has only been painting full time since 2015.

Where at first the swaths of paint across her canvases were inspired by the outside world, her attentions have recently navigated inward, resulting in paintings—using pastels, charcoal, spray paint, and graphite—that are animated by feelings, thoughts, and sensations.



*Notes for Later #3*, 2018, Acrylic, soft-pastel, charcoal, spray paint on canvas, 48 x 36 inches

"Sensory perception is a growing focus in my life and my work because I have synesthesia," she says. Don't know what that means? Day explains:

"When I'm experiencing heightened emotion, I see blurs of lush color in my peripheral vision. Basically, my mind interprets emotion as color; it's as if I'm holding a colored filter over part of my vision. Looking straight ahead, my sight is unaffected, but in the peripheries there are rich washes of cyan, burnt orange, phthalo blues, or fuchsia. As soon as I shift my focus towards these mercurial colors, they dissipate. There are a lot of moments like these that happen on the sidelines, in the periphery. When we close our eyes, we still see the color and distorted shapes left over from the light entering our eyes. The periphery is always where the good stuff comes from. That's what I'm drawn to."

Looking again at Day's work, this seems to explain everything. Her paintings, which can, at first glance, appear like simple assemblages of colors on canvas, can, on deeper observation, connect to our unconscious mind to that place where the world is understood by waves of sensations.

If you happen to be in New York this winter, catch the exhibit at Joshua Liner Gallery (540 W. 28th St.) through February 23rd. Locally, you can see her recent mural installation at Napa Valley's Provenance Vineyards.