

“Review: Recollected Forms at Joshua Liner Gallery, NYC”

Jessica Ross / May 7, 2018



David Ellis in front of *Bird Pyramid*, 2016

Nostalgia is a powerful tool—a lot of artists use nostalgia to investigate memory via their work, and this month, Joshua Liner Gallery’s new group exhibition does just that. Artists David Ellis, Kevin Umaña and Matthew King have embarked on their own individual journeys to explore how sentimentality informs their own practice and how to communicate their own connections through minimalism. Utilizing succinct contemporary form, nominal color palettes and optical illusion, each artist leans into their own unique aesthetic while playfully communicating with one another.

According to the gallery - “For this curated exhibition, the artists navigate the possibilities of mining the pictorial language of 1960s Modernism, through personal and contemporary lenses. Many of the forms and compositions recall mid-century Minimalism, Hard-edge painting, and modernist architecture with its utopian ideals of living. Through various applications and mediums, including wood, aluminum, acrylic, resin, and collage, these artists utilize their materials to create works composed of simplified forms that defy the easy categorization of painting or sculpture. In direct contrast to the historical traditions of these 1960s art movements, which leaned towards the isolated and objective, these three artists create a dialogue through their work that brings memory, nostalgia, and landscape to the forefront of their practice.”



Kevin Umaña, *Elliðaár Bridge*, 2018

When entering the gallery, each artists' works are displayed amongst each other, creating a dialogue of form and color. First we see Kevin Umaña, a newcomer to Liner's roster. His formed canvasses and animated forms are flawlessly assembled, giving insight into to his mathematical process and strategic color blocking. Constructed with an attention to detail, with a heavy emphasis on design and architecture, the artist elaborates "For this series, I focused on certain properties of a bridge and broke them down into simple components, re-arranged them and transformed them into a new geometric configuration." After recently completing a month long residency in Iceland and traveling extensively throughout the last year, his influences are clear and shine through his paintings. To create more depth, he's also added textural components to the surfaces of his works, utilizing materials like sand and stucco.

Moving along, the exhibition enters the mixed media works of David Ellis. Large-scale sculptures of compressed vinyl covers are then finished in resin to create a glossy shrine-like piece off the wall. Assembled by color and gradient, the works from a far are abstract and un-knowable, but up-close create an entire different experience for the viewer. Easily identifiable to any lover of music, one can scroll through his musical altarpieces like they would a record shop. According to the gallery - "Ellis fossilizes the past, encasing the vintage record albums in a glossy layer of resin, exploiting Minimalism's application of simple geometric forms, seriality, Gestalt theory, and sleek exterior, while simultaneously adding history and memory by implementing found objects." Perhaps the biggest operator of nostalgia in the show, Ellis's sculptures create a visual manifestation of music and a powerful impression on the viewer.



Matthew King, #247 & #237, 2018

Lastly is the work of Matthew King. Known primarily for his constructed mixed media works that incorporate 1960's and 1970's minimalism aesthetics with photography of open American landscapes, King has brought forth a variety of works for "Recollected Forms." With a continued emphasis on warm, yellow and orange palettes, King has created sculptural wooden works that produce rigid borders for his forms as well as provide an element of optical illusion. From the gallery - "King takes formal directives from architecture, building infrastructure, and road signs, among other things. The birch assemblages function both as pictures and sculptures, always insisting on their dual spatial presence and painterly illusion. The artist's hand can be seen in these clean, bold geometric shapes and dynamic optical patterns, yet as applied with a brush, they remind us of the artist's hand at work." Playing alongside with Umaña's nods to architecture, the two artists' works operate synchronistically with each other.