

Teasing the Shape of Things

ARGENTINIAN-BORN, SANTA BARBARA-BASED ARTIST ZACK PAUL EXPERIMENTS WITH SHAPES, COLORS, AND THE CONTEXTS OF MATERIALS IN HIS 'GEOMETRIC LANDSCAPES'

By Josef Woodard,
News-Press Correspondent



Zack Paul, 'Geometric Landscapes'

When: through April 13

Where: Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara, 653 Paseo Nuevo

Hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays; 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursdays; Noon to 5 p.m. Sundays

Information: 966-5373, mcasantabarbara.org

Entering the small, niche gallery housing the Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara's "Bloom Projects" shows, often site-specific in nature, first impressions are likely to run high and "low." Such is the layered nature of Zack Paul's eye-and-mind-teasing exhibition, coyly dubbed "Geometric Landscapes."

From a formal and art historical standpoint, Mr. Paul's "Shield #A1-F6," the large, sharp-edged and vividly colored design consuming the back wall of the corner space and the centerpiece of the show/installation, taps as its visual source the objectivity-seeking "hard-edged" and "neo-geo" genres of abstract painting over the past several decades.

But it's not as serious or single-minded as all that. Critical differences from the disciplined cool of the geo-set include the massive scale – essentially a mini-mural of 36 smallish panels – and the material list, which includes the presumably lowly stuff of sandpaper and vinyl. Looking closer, longer and from different angles at the piece, we also notice elusive perceptual ideas woven into it, which are not

as geometrically strict or rectilinear as we initially think. Implications of vantage points and spatial and architectural references sneak into one's senses.

Born in Buenos Aires and now based in Santa Barbara, Mr. Paul is an artist who thinks and looks outside the box, and doesn't take aspects of the art-making process for granted. His training in graphic art can be seen in the discerning eye for the shapes and textures of things, while his conceptual palette stretches and breathes to include the influence of aerial photography of agricultural fields (a direct link to the idea of "geometric landscapes"), the scalar vertigo of miniature architectural models, and even sci-fi maverick, Phillip K. Dick's dystopian novel, "The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch."

In the piece called "Information Display," square display units tilted at 45-degree angles remind us of information kiosks at parks or places of historical interest, but here, the information imparted to the info-hungry is all about color, shape and texture. His "Minus 7200" series, with "found stones" glued to boards on the floor, asserts a droll, Dadaist wink of an idea, suggesting what sandpaper might look like when magnified to an extreme state.

Sandpaper is clearly on the artist's brain, a common and functional material celebrated in this body of work, and nowhere as plainly as in the outdoor Glassbox display case, a minimalist howdy-do to the Museum's current, new shows. In the piece called "Homage to Inspirational Material," Mr. Paul shows constructions and debris sparsely organized in the available space, boasting palpable textures and somehow making sandpaper reveal its sensual side. The "inspirational" part of the title is only half a joke, if that.

In short, Mr. Paul's deceptively calm and casual exhibition here fits neatly into the general aesthetic agenda of work in the "Bloom" series. What we see is more than we think we get, with a little lateral thinking and viewing.



Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara photos

Installation view of Zack Paul's 'Geometric Landscapes'



'Information Display #1-3'

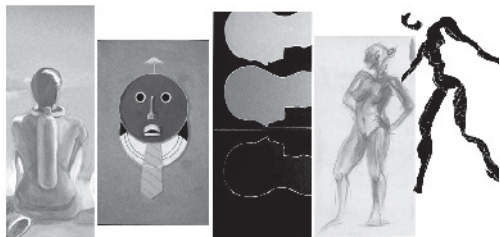


'Minus 7200 grit, #1-3'

In Figure

An Exhibit of Artwork from 11 Extraordinary Artists

Wayne Hoffman	Isabelle Greene	Morris B. Squire
John Carlander	Jan Ziegler	Larry Iwerks
Tara Patrick	Brad Nack	Dustin Pappas
Allan Gibbons		Karin Aggeler



Reception: Friday Jan. 10, 5-8 pm
Panel Discussion: 6:30 pm

Join us for a fun and informative evening of contemporary art.
Panel Discussion with the artists, moderated by Charles Donelan at 6:30.



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