

Momentum: Art Doesn't Stand Still

Momentum Tulsa is an important yearly exhibition that highlights emerging artists in Oklahoma, often recognizing innovation and exploratory mediums. Momentum Tulsa 2013 introduces new work by 53 emerging Oklahoma artists. In this exhibition the spotlight artists, Molly Youngblood, Leigh Martin, and Stuart Whitis, serve as corner stones for three of the thematic veins seen throughout the work: race/culture, the organic, and abstraction.

Molly Youngblood explores stereotypes through characters, or caricatures, she has constructed. Through taking on the role of these characters, she learns from people in those environments and documents her experiences in video and photography. Viewers of her work are confronted with their own tendencies to stereotype and pass judgment on others. Many of the other works in this exhibition are in dialogue with Youngblood's work through the forks of stereotypes and social commentary, exploring both race and culture.

Leigh Martin incorporates the handwork of knitting with that of actual living plants in order to create environmentally focused work that raises awareness about life cycles and decomposition. She focuses on studies of saprobic fungi, or organisms that derive nourishment from decaying organic matter. This theme of the organic is another common thread throughout the exhibition, either in content or line quality. Several of the works throughout Momentum have elements of life, regeneration, and growth while others are inspired by the organic through their treatment of materials.

The large-scale painting by Stuart Whitis takes an innovative approach to abstraction using computer pixilation to aid in a new interpretation of Impressionism. He uses scale in this work in the same way in which a low-resolution photograph when blown up distorts and creates a low-fi aesthetic. Complementary to his work, many of the general submissions are experimenting with new approaches to abstraction, both in geometric or biomorphic styles and in conjunction with unexpected color palettes.

The survey exhibition and the spotlight artists represent a broad range of mediums, but are heavily focused on installations. They represent the current progression in contemporary art to fully immerse the viewer in an environment as opposed to the tradition of presenting an individual work of art. The emerging artists of Oklahoma are tackling new uses of technology, traditional craft mediums, and techniques in their work while actively participating in the movement to create full experiences for the viewer.

It has been a pleasure to work with each of the participating artists, as well as with OVAC's dedicated team of volunteers and stellar staff. It is our hope that Momentum Tulsa 2013 artists are encouraged by their participation in the exhibition, and that each viewer thoroughly enjoys the Momentum Tulsa experience.

Momentum Tulsa 2013 Curators:

Emily Kern, Executive Director of 108 Contemporary
& Krystle Brewer, MA Candidate, Oklahoma State University