

Give Thanks for Noteworthy Art Shows at Three Denver Galleries



Over the Thanksgiving holidays, you may be looking for things to do with visiting family and friends. But face it, at this late date you're not going to get Monet tickets. Instead, hit up some of the city's other art attractions that may not be blockbusters but are definitely worth a look.

LoDo's K Contemporary is part of a consortium of galleries that includes Abend Gallery and Gallery 1261, and switches off spaces depending on the exhibit. Right now, Abend is hosting the 29th Annual Holiday Miniatures Show in the large spaces on the first floor, while K Contemporary is currently occupying the second floor, where director Doug Kacena has installed the impressive solo Trey Egan: Visible Layers. In just a few years, K Contemporary has built a reputation as one of the city's top galleries. Kacena pulled this off so quickly by snagging many of the state's most-talked-about artists, including Melissa Furness, Suchitra Mattai, Jonathan Saiz, Kevin Sloan, Mario Zoots, Monique Crine, Michael Dowling and, most recently, Andrew Jensdotter. But K also presents the work of artists from outside the area: Trey Egan, for instance, lives and works in Dallas.

Egan is an abstractionist informed by a lot of the classic moves associated with the approach; he has written that “this system of abstraction mostly constructs itself through intuitive actions, combined with an innate awareness of spatial relationships.” He’s essentially an automatist who relies on what he has called the “primal and unconscious” tapping into a felt source within his own psyche. This, of course, is the traditional abstract-expressionist method. But Egan’s paintings look very current, perhaps because of his generous application of juicy, candy-colored marks that resolve into amorphous shapes clustered into funky compositions. Those bright colors dominate these paintings, but Egan also uses a lot of recessive earthy shades for contrast, and to provide the grounds from which the complex shapes rise.



Synesthetic abstracts by Trey Egan at K Contemporary. - JORDAN SPENCER, COURTESY OF K CONTEMPORARY

The surface details of these Egan’s are intriguing, because the artist brings a range of painterly methods together unexpectedly, like fields of flat coats of dull matte pigment laid right next to super-expressionist globs of shiny, high-gloss paints. And there’s all manner of brushwork tactics between these two poles, as well. For Egan, these contrasts in method result from the phenomenon of synesthesia, in which different sensory experiences occur simultaneously. He listens to electronic music while working, and the layering of the sounds guides his automatist painting: The audio experience merges with the visual one in the completed works.

– Hilal Bahcetepe