

Summer of Possibilities 09.07 – 21.08.2022

Curated by Alteronce Gumby

In art, one cannot forecast what the future will look like. We can make predictions based on technological trends, the social and political climate, and cultural shifts that permeate the collective subconscious. However, how anything will manifest can only be understood from the perspective of history. The why and how the process of art-making contains tangible breaks can only be described through what art-making is, which is ultimately the production of possibilities in the dedication to making art.

Alteronce Gumby sat down with artist David Reed, and in exchanging thoughts on the academic side of the art world and the development of Abstraction, narratives & stories about Reed's interaction with Willem de Kooning during a visit he made to The New York Studio School in the late '60s, describe an artist who thought of himself as always working on his paintings. However, to have reached that active state of being, the now-known group of Abstract Expressionists to which he belongs must have experienced something that caused their collective manifestation. Reed describes how during his visit with the composer Morton Feldman, the then dean at the school, de Kooning could only say that not knowing what they were meant to do was the cause of that break. The state of the world and their community during the late '40s shook artists then, leaving them to wander the streets of New York City one summer, in August to be exact, questioning what exactly they were meant to do. Reed recalls the specificity with which de Kooning narrated this confusing time. However, it was only in retrospect that he knew the importance of that moment. That the situation of the unknown presented endless possibilities. It was then that they looked to create, to shed preconceived notions of what was expected of them and to open the door to endless possibilities of production, aesthetics, and meaning.

Summer of Possibilities is an homage to that one summer in August when artists did not know. It combines emerging and established artists who represent the work of art-making and the importance of those historical breaks that exist in their practices. But it is also a statement about the process of art-making now. The practice of working and producing boundless possible opportunities within Abstraction which comes with the continuous dedication to the work. Regardless of how that work manifests, each piece is a collection of moments that mesh and intertwine; a puzzle piece of what is known and what isn't that then produces possibilities within the limitless.

Anthony Akinbola (b. 1991 in Columbia, Missouri) is a contemporary artist who takes unconventional approaches to painting and sculpture. He reimagines the construction of identity through original treatments of color and texture. His techniques explore the possibilities of totemic materials such palm oil, hair brushes, and durags—fiber scarves used in the maintenance of Black hair.

Louis Cameron (b. 1973 in Columbus, Ohio) works in painting and photography. His paintings are collages on canvas with patterned compositions. His diverse photography practice encompasses the creation of portraits and abstractions that engage the traditions Surrealism and Dada.

Ryan Cosbert (b. 1999 in Brooklyn, New York) is a contemporary artist who rigorously researches the history and people of the African diaspora which is used as inspiration for the subjects of her work. When it comes to Cosbert's abstract paintings she creates a sense of control using the grid format to apply what she calls "tiles" which creates a geometrical balance. Cosbert often incorporates physical objects and colors that tie directly to the subject matter of the painting.

Keltie Ferris (b. 1977 in Louisville, Kentucky) is an abstract contemporary painter. Ferris uses several main techniques in his work, including spray guns, chunky paint applied with palette knives, among other techniques. His work references such disparate sources as pointillism, pixelation, and graffiti, and invite the viewer to question what it is they are seeing and to put the images together for themselves

Tomashi Jackson (b. 1980 in Houston, Texas) is a multimedia artist working across painting, video, textiles and sculpture. Jackson's work investigates the relationships between the aesthetic and the political. She references layered content that bridge historical actions with shifting artistic structures.

Stephanie Lüning (b. 1978 in Schwerin, Germany) is a contemporary artist whose practice focus lies on ephemeral, process based art in public spaces and on interactive based art. With these different methods and attempts she tries to fathom (play with) the generic limits of "painting" and its "open-ended" results. Her works often takes over public spaces through foam machines and becomes collectively interactive with the use of colored ice cubes.

Chris Martin (b. 1954 in Washington, D.C.) is an abstract painter whose bright and colorful take inspiration from an array of cultural traditions. He privileges stylistic diversity and immediacy over predetermined aesthetic ideas, generating an art that can be as primal as it is knowing, as vibrantly joyful as it is meditative and hermetic.

Tariku Shiferaw (b. 1983 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) is an abstract painter who explores mark-making addressing the physical and metaphysical spaces of painting and social structures.

Sylvia Snowden (b. 1942, Raleigh, North Carolina) is a contemporary artist whose practice extends from canvas to the object. By working with a mix of acrylics, oil pastels, and mixed media, Snowden looks to create textured works that convey the "feel of paint". The dense surfaces and painterly quality of her works are typical of Snowden's approach to tackling difficult themes and urban hardships which focus on personal narratives and the lives of her neighbors.

Joan Snyder (b. 1940 in Highland Park, New Jersey) is a contemporary painter who began her practice with gestural "stroke paintings", which used the grid to deconstruct and retell the story of abstract painting. By the late 70s Snyder, began to more explicitly incorporate symbols and text, as the paintings took on a more complex materiality. Her paintings contain narratives of both personal and communal experiences.

David Reed (b. 1946 in San Diego, California) is a contemporary visual artist. He is known for his signature long, narrow abstract paintings which feature several images resembling enlarged photographs of swirling brushstrokes that are juxtaposed in a single painting. Reed's paintings are engaged in a crossover between film, the electronic media and everyday culture.