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4 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

The New York Times, April 21, 2021.

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'Latinx Abstract'

Through May 2. BRIC, 647 Fulton Street, Brooklyn. bricartsmedia.org.



The ten artists in “Latinx Abstract” have two things in common: As per the exhibition’s title, all are Latinx and make abstract art. Aesthetically, however, there are few similarities among their works. Each artist has a distinct approach and style — and that variety is key to the show’s success.

The oldest two in the cross-generational group, Fanny Sanín and Freddy Rodríguez, create geometric paintings — a significant type of Latin American abstraction with roots in Modernism. But whereas canonically appointed work in this vein is often staid and spare, Sanín and Rodríguez offer dynamic compositions that pulse with color and form (and in Rodríguez’s case, a host of symbolic meanings).

From that sense of motion, it’s a short step to giving up on geometry altogether. The shapes in Candida Alvarez’s intimate “Vision” paintings are blobby and curvy — suggesting a softness that appears in the textile works of Vargas-Suarez Universal and Sarah Zapata. Their pieces embrace imperfection and the fact of being handmade, as does Mary Valverde’s multimedia installation “Huaca” (2021), which suggests counting as a sacred ritual. Valverde’s use of repetition and references to Indigenous cultures resonate with Glendalys Medina’s wall constructions, which are intricate, vibrational totems.

If there’s an overarching theme to “Latinx Abstract,” it may be the connection between art-making and ritual. But more important is the feeling of freedom that pervades the exhibition. These artists are inspired by the possibilities of abstraction and their Latin American heritages, not bound by the expectations and institutional baggage that in the United States come with them.

- JILLIAN STEINHAUER

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