

BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

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Bridgette Mayer reopens with Karmic Abstraction

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The show *Karmic Abstraction* marks the much anticipated reopening of Washington Square's [Bridgette Mayer Gallery](#). Closed for renovations throughout much of 2011, the gallery has a fresh and expanded interior set to handle all of the large-scale works in a show of this kind. *Karmic Abstraction* is an exhibition by sixteen nationally and internationally recognized artists. Conceptually, it seeks to tap into the multitude of ways in which standing before a work of art can affect the viewer, as well as the ideas and actions that define the individual artists and their personal histories.



Ryan McGinness, Untitled (Black Hole, Black 72.1), 2008, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas, 72" diameter

One piece in the show has a particularly strong gravitational pull. "Untitled (Black Hole, Black 72.1)" by Ryan McGinness is a massive mandala on the very back wall of the gallery. Once you stand before this spiraling chasm and try to follow the layered patterns, it becomes entrancing and doesn't seem willing to let you go, not unlike its namesake. Despite its gravity, for a *black hole* it is surprisingly bright and detailed. It even has black lights set up on the floor nearby so that the colors literally glow, although considering the neon palette this seems a bit excessive. Regardless, its radial patterns definitely serve as a focal point at the exhibition, and instead of capturing light Black Hole's ambiance captures attention.



Matthew Fischer, By the Patience of My Mother, 2010, Oil on Panel, 25 x 22"

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In both color and form, Matthew Fischer has a very curious creation with his work "By the Patience of My Mother." Most of the canvas is crisscrossed with wide brushstrokes, but the topmost layer is by far the most jaunting. A pair of angled, gestural strokes in lime-green-neon-yellow stand out from the rest of the painting. The ambivalent color choice is one factor that makes it intriguing — is that a yellow hue? Is it green? In places the hue even verges on blue. The work also contains a strange degree of depth, appearing almost three-dimensional in its shadows, highlights, and changes of direction. The painting is otherwise non-objective and the title seems purely associative.



Radcliffe Bailey, Four and One Corner - South, 2005, Mixed Media on Wood, 90 x 90"

Radcliffe Bailey has a large 90 x 90 inch work which straddles the line between history and pure abstraction. The top two-thirds of the work is covered in multicolored bars, a measure of music notes, and the esoteric text elements "1910" and "MARS." Front and center is a collage element in a plastic window — an antique photo of a young, well-dressed African American man. Presumably this is a connection to the artist's ancestors; and it is also the only realistic image in the entire gallery. White pieces of cloth covered in paint drip down all of the layers and onto the dirt-colored lower third. This work frames African identity in a multitude of ways through location, time, family, and community. The repeated bar motif and music notes also call to mind the enormous influence African culture has had on American music throughout its history.



Leslie Wayne, One Big Love #40, 2010, Oil on Wood, 13 x 10"

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Leslie Wayne's "One Big Love" is small, but noteworthy. The object appears to be made from dried and peeled layers of paint placed sideways in cross section. It brings to mind sediment and geology as well as the recent art historical discovery that many paintings were rendered on top of other scenes. "Yellow Build" by Nathan Pankratz appears almost liquid-like, except for the fact that it is divided in a way that also references a frame. The wispy paint strokes in yellow and blue are in sharp contrast to the geometric, cutout form that defines the piece.



Nathan Pankratz, Yellow Build, 2011, Acrylic on Canvas, 50 x 60"

Ultimately it is great to have Bridgette Mayer back and showing work at her expanded home base. With its refurbished space, the gallery comes out swinging with another solid show of abstract curiosities and creations. Hopefully, this is a taste of what's to come — even greater exhibitions for the 2012 season.