

PRESS

Still Abstract After All These Years

Art and Antiques

Edward M. Gómez
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Of all the styles, theory-driven rallying cries, movements, schools and creative curiosities that have played memorable parts in modern art's evolution, few have been as durable and permutable as abstraction-in-painting, sculpture and countless mixed-media forms.

Today, photo-based and conceptualist art genres, influenced by postmodernist critical theory, may still rule the roost in some precincts of the art market, but wherever painting and sculpture are still robustly present, expect to find abstract works by well-known masters and up-and-comers alike on view in galleries and museums. The creations of the five U.S.-based artists profiled here offer a vivid portrait of the different ways in which art-makers are still finding meaning and expressive power in the enduring language of abstraction.

POUR, BABY POUR! It was during a residency a couple of years ago at Yaddo, the upstate New York retreat for painters, poets, writers, composers and other artists, that Elisabeth Condon began experimenting with a paint-pouring technique on canvas, combining its results with brushy, random patterns and depictions of various recognizable subjects -trees, rock formations, a craggy mountain here or an isolated Buddhist temple there. Condon grew up in Los Angeles, where she was a teen fan of 1970s glam rock and studied at U.C.L.A. and the Otis College of Art and Design. Having soaked up that sprawling city's always-in-motion vibe and Southern California's light, she eventually traded her platform shoes for Taoist texts and books about ancient Chinese painting.

Her interests and influences are as diverse and unpredictable as her compositions are well-balanced and complete, even inevitable.

This is true despite the tough odds she sets up for herself with her combination of postmodernist pastiche and exciting accident.

For an artist who has said, "I want to work with direct experience as much as possible; it feels more real to me" (so goes the love song of abstract-expressionist painting), it's no surprise that she has also observed, "I think about space in terms of layers and immediate visual impact." For Condon, space - real space around her and that of her painted images - is a container for a "tsunami of visual information to sort out."

Settled on canvas, to which, in more recent works, Condon has affixed Mylar sheets, those waves of color have incorporated dramatic splashes of paint and shiny, wrinkled surface textures, too, all in homage to the spirit of the music-club nightlife of the artist's not-so-distant, sequined youth.

Read more about the artist

[Elisabeth Condon](#)