

Bruce Pearson, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, 31 Mercer Street to October 8th

Please Note: All Photos of Bruce Pearson's work are by Alan Zindman and are courtesy of Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York



Bruce Pearson at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

Okay, for those of you with a preponderance toward painterly abstract painting its time to take a deep breath or start running in the opposite direction. Bruce Pearson's work offers a great deal of color, graphic imagery and even texture but absent nearly of any relationship to conventional painterly considerations. This must be accepted (and acceptable) before continuing. The gallery press release describes the work as being based on *text, reworked photo images, and abstractions that are woven together to the point of near indecipherability.*

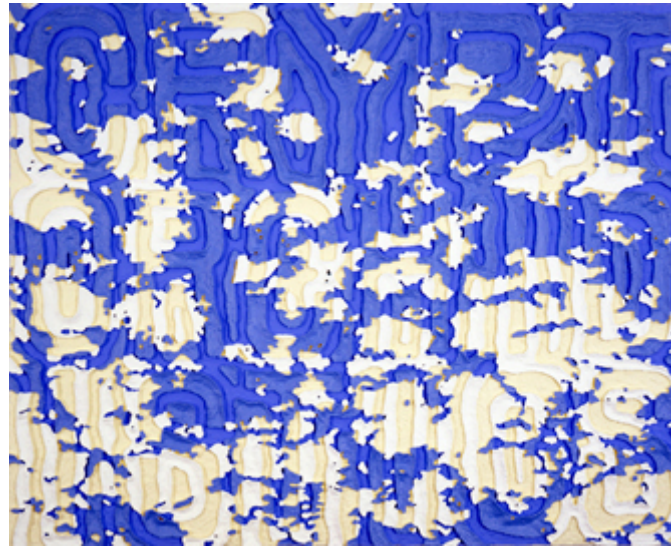


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No argument with that. Looking at some of images you can just make out the text which serves as both a tease and visual element.

Given the above, how is one to approach these pieces? They are paintings in the sense that they are primarily 2 dimensional and enlist formal elements like color and texture. But rather than creating paintings, Pearson seems more about commenting on painting. The discourse is serious but also tongue-in-cheek which serves as a crucial ingredient for the work. This is primarily manifested in the joyful carnality of the color and deeply etched texture between the forms. Perhaps an apt description would be to call them retro-pop abstractions. From this perspective the artist is offering a whimsical poke in the eye at the conventions of abstract painting. But it doesn't end there.

Pearson may be kidding us on one level; but on another, with a focus on patterns, systems and media, he serves up a subtle conceptual agenda. The overt patterning serves as a distraction to the subtler bits of text (or other patterns) buried underneath. However, the relationship between the two defines the subject matter which is nevertheless cold and au Post-Modern. What makes this so is the flat graphic quality of the work combined with textual elements. In the end the content for this work is not about what is buried under all the sappy color. It's really about the process of reading between the lines; the sublime distress of buried truth. From this perspective these are very chilling paintings indeed with a strong correlation to contemporary media.



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