

REVIEW: *Massachusetts*

XYLOR JANE: COUNTERCLOCKWISE

The University Museum of Contemporary Art, UMass Amherst • Amherst, MA • fac.umass.edu/UMCA • Through April 28, 2019

Xylor Jane is a “double seven,” which is, according to psychologists and the artist herself, “the most magical number.” Therefore, it’s not a surprise that Jane’s exhibition *Counterclockwise* is filled with oddly enticing numerical sequences, sacred shapes and bewitching patterns.

The exhibition features 13 oil-on-panel paintings, completed between 2006 and 2017, and operates as a semi-retrospective of Xylor’s work since moving to Massachusetts. This is the first time they’ve been shown together.

Though Jane’s bold lines appear to be the product of close measurement and meticulous planning, a closer look reveals the work’s wild secrets. A viewer discerns constellations of marks linking nebulas of tiny shapes, dots and strokes both painterly and ridged. Yet, from a distance, the seemingly frantic marks become ordered and often reveal tetradic prime numbers, sacred geometry and other magical or numerical symbols. “Some people can’t see the numbers, and some people can’t *not* see them,” says Jane.



Xylor Jane, *Magic Square for Finding Lost People*, 2014, oil on panel, 24 x 24". Private collection. Courtesy Pettit Art Partners, New York.

The full range of optic experiences present in the collected works of *Counterclockwise* cannot be represented in a photo or on a screen. Many of the paintings utilize metallic paints to reflect external light sources that create complex

illusions on the work itself. Jane seems to gravitate towards lovely jewel tones of colors while also using matte blacks with a dash of color to further play with perspective. In addition to each piece having its own unique composition, color and visual language, the size of each painting varies—some less than a foot on each side, and others span several feet across.

Though some people who intentionally engage with matters related to mystical consciousness often assign certain meaning to numbers, shapes and patterns, Jane’s goal isn’t to convey a specific idea through the forms in her work. “I always hope that these forms, often numbers, bring goodwill into the world,” she says.

In this way, these 13 paintings exist in two worlds—the material and spiritual. While each painting is an abstract representation of earthly symbols, gestures and natural patterns, viewers cannot ignore the fact that Jane’s hand, meditative intentions and secrets are deeply embedded in each piece.

—John W. Arvanitis