

# The New York Times

## Art in Review

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### Xylor Jane

N.D.E.

Canada

55 Chrystie Street, near Hester Street, Lower East Side

Through March 29

Xylor Jane shares with many painters a sense of touch, color and craft, but she has something else: a private, intuitive mathematics in which prime numbers, calendars and the passage of time figure large. Her systems add another wrinkle to the use of grids (Agnes Martin, Sol LeWitt, Jennifer Bartlett), progressions (Donald Judd, Mario Merz) and counting (On Kawara, Roman Opalka) in modern art.

Ms. Jane's grids are super-fine; their squares are anointed with a single slightly raised dot of color or they are left blank to form negative motifs defined by surrounding dots. In the most amazing works these motifs are extended numbers that repeat down entire surfaces, forming columns of pattern that fade in and out of legibility, as in the rainbow spectrum of "13,831" — a prime number that is also a palindrome.

Other patterns are abstract, the product of counting systems that yield elaborate bilateral symmetries. This is the case with "Selfsame," and the butterflylike patterns of "Lepidoptera," which both use the rainbow palette. Sometimes larger ghostly shapes or patterns can be glimpsed floating behind the dots — signs of a system that is impossible to trace. This occurs in the large X's of "Selfsame" and the seemingly all-white "Day Break 1" or the repeating chevrons in "12.11.10," another

white work.

"Bombinating," where pearlescent patterns have an Art Deco cadence, seems to offer a microscopic view of natural surfaces like butterfly wings or shells.

The stunning variety and handmade imperfections of Ms. Jane's art reflect its autobiographical nature. N.D.E., the show's title, stands for Near Death Experience, in reference to one she recently had. Her counting systems often begin with her birthday and measure different periods of her life. In ways alternately explicit and subtle, her work reveals the miracle and the drudgery of art-making as well as the wonders of the human mind and its needs.

ROBERTA SMITH