

Xylor Jane *N.D.E.*

CANADA February 26 – March 29, 2009 John Yau

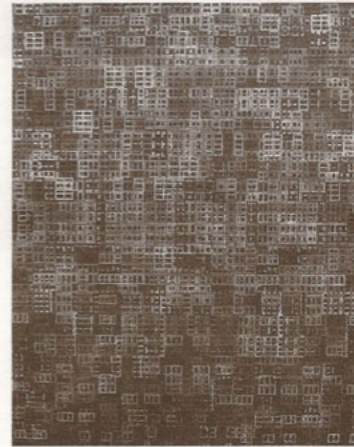
First known for her works on paper, Xylor Jane now paints on square or nearly square wood panels. Her methodology continues to be simple and straightforward, a fat dot of paint carefully placed within each square of a grid. Think Georges Seurat meets Alfred Jensen meets Peter Young and you get an inkling of what the artist does with her deliberately limited vocabulary. You can also sense the optical complexity she is able to achieve in painting. Using a no-frills visual language that recalls the binaries and algorithms basic to computer programming, Jane applies the dots according to a predetermined system, which usually brings together pure mathematics with something more visceral.

In this exhibition, the paintings were generated from premises as diverse as a society's organization of time (the Julian calendar), a cliché (life flashing before your eyes), and the cellular structure that causes iridescence on butterfly wings. Whatever the originating impulse, the result always remains squarely within an experiential realm that embraces both the optical and the physical. For all of her knowledge and love of mathematics and abstract systems, it is the odd wrinkle that delights her. What happens, she might ask, when a particular prime number (13831) is also a palindrome? It is in these instances—where something delicious and unexplainable

happens—that the artist expresses her wonderment at being alive in an infinite, changing reality.

Not surprisingly, Jane's dots of paint recall William Blake: to see the universe in a grain of sand. Her dots are analogous to colored grains of sand, which she uses to patiently construct visual schemes that seem at once open and opaque, dense and accessible. I found myself poring over the paintings like a watchmaker or cartographer, noticing the specificity of each dot, its physicality recalling that it was put there by hand, that it is evidence of attention and a lover's delicate caress. Moving back and forth in front of the paintings, drawing away and stepping closer, as if afflicted with myopia, I was reminded that research in pure science or mathematics could be an act of devotion driven by curiosity. Jane is never less than completely responsible to each inch of the surface, never inattentive to any part of the painting.

As acts of devotion, Jane's paintings celebrate the mysteries basic to common sights and experiences. In this regard, she shares something with the major but unknown German painter Peter Dreher, whose *TAG UM TAG IS GUTER TAG (ANY DAY IS A GOOD DAY)* consists of over 4,500 paintings of the same empty, nondescript drinking glass inexpressively executed under the most neutral of conditions. Although this is not



Xylor Jane, *N.D.E.*, at Canada. Photo: 16 Miles.

her intention, Jane's paintings serve notice to those who continue to cling to the belief in the death of originality and the debilitating effect of the simulacrum: open your eyes, there is more to life than being arty and doing the next right thing. ■■