



ARTS

"Ana Esteve Llorens: Studies for Future Objects" at Women & Their Work

The show's mix of colored textile works and a large installation of open ovals spark an urge to interact with them

REVIEWED BY SAM ANDERSON-RAMOS, FRI., DEC. 16, 2016



Gallery view of "Ana Esteve Llorens: Studies of Future Objects" at Women & Their Work Gallery

My most persistent thought while viewing Ana Esteve Llorens' work was that I wanted to put my head on it. Aside from her room-sized installation, *Dividing Structure With 22 Ovals*, each piece in "Studies for Future Objects" is made from hand-woven cotton, dyed and stretched over a frame. *Textile With Diagonal Yellow I* is typical. Two mustard yellow diagonals meet in the middle of an off-white fabric surface where they form a point. Formally, the piece is quite basic, but it remains compelling, like an Ellsworth Kelly experiment. Even so, the thing reminds me of an IKEA couch pillow, which is why I wanted to put my head on it. I do not mean this as a criticism. I enjoy the work's tactility. I like that I want to reach out and touch it. What's better is that because of the

way Llorens has crafted the piece, allowing the seams and imperfections to remain visible, I can imagine what it would be like to touch without having to do it. In all of the woven work in this Women & Their Work show, seams between the dyed and undyed sections are emphasized by uncut material that undulates in lines like the fins of manta rays or long, tapered leaves. It is sensual, something one should run their finger along – the edges of a fleshy wound. But there's nothing messy or dirty here, which contributes to my desire to be close with it.

Each piece in the show harnesses a single, assertive color. In addition to yellow, Llorens uses black, green, purple, orange, and blue, each arranged in a simple, geometric pattern, and each with equal authority. These pieces ring the massive *22 Ovals*, a honeycomb-like structure of white walls with ovals cut into them. The ovals are large enough that a person could walk through. From just outside the installation, the structure is disorienting, like a hall of mirrors, offering multiple layers of entry and exit with no apparent beginning or end. The physical structure carves space the same way the woven patterns of color do, though in a monumental, even invasive, way. I really wanted to walk through the installation, but wasn't sure if I'd be scolded for it, so I didn't, which is too bad. A true experience of a piece like this one would seem to require thorough interaction. That said, the gallery is small enough that, in order to get a good look at some of the wall pieces, I had to back myself into the space occupied by *22 Ovals*. Those were confining moments. I felt pressed in on all sides. I consider this a strength of the piece. I like when artwork forces me into something, though it does make me wonder how a white structure so full of holes and with every indication of openness could feel so oppressive. Perhaps being confronted with so many possible avenues is inherently claustrophobic, anxiety-inspiring, like a maze. It may be an odd phenomenon, that enclosure in the midst of endless abstracted passageways, but not necessarily. See *Textile With Curved Green I*, two thick, vertical swoops of green meeting in a lopsided valley, like the crook of a meaty arm. There may be captivity for one embraced there, but there is also comfort: the molten, transformative safety of being mastered by an overpowering, muscular strength.

“Ana Esteve Llorens: Studies for Future Objects”

Women & Their Work Gallery, 1710 Lavaca, 512/477-1064

www.womenandtheirwork.org

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