

Artillery Mag
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SONCE
ALEXANDER
GALLERY

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KILLER TEXT ON ART

TOM MUESKE

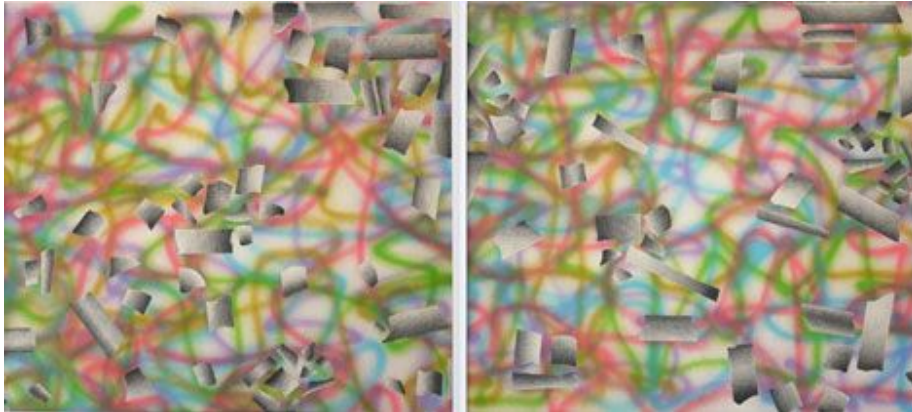
Sonce Alexander Gallery/Los Angeles

by Emily Nimptsch



Tom Mueske, Shapes, 2014. Courtesy: Sonce Alexander Gallery

Since graduating from the San Francisco Institute of the Arts in 2007, Mueske has been consistently making noteworthy artwork in ink. The artist has recently expanded his repertoire to include works in spray paint and enamel. “Tom Mueske: Recent Work” is on view now at Sonce Alexander Gallery. All of Mueske’s works are greatly influenced by the spontaneous gestures made famous by the Abstract Expressionists of the 1950s. These uncontrolled movements of the artist’s hand signal back to Greenbergian Modernism. But instead of the using oil paint, Mueske chooses more contemporary media. He mimics and illustrates the AbEx gestures with updated materials.



Tom Mueske,
Warped I & II,
2014. Courtesy:
Sonce Alexander
Gallery

Like the Modernists, Mueske espouses an imperfect aesthetic, one that looks as though it was truly made by human hands. The artist explains in the gallery’s press release, “I attempt to perform gestures that are sincere and genuine. I often make marks with my wrong hand or behind my back. This removes any expectations of what is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ that I bring to the work.” This insistence upon mark-making without judgment recalls the Surrealists’ penchant for automatic drawing as a way of getting at the subconscious mind. Drawing in this manner is an extremely vulnerable act as so-called “mistakes” are ubiquitous.

His series of eight smaller works “Untitled Installation” (2009) perfectly illustrate Mueske’s predilection for unrestrained drawing. He creates a symphony of chaotic, undulating and intermingling circles and lines that together create unexpected rhythm and beauty. He is begging the question—can we create something beautiful by accident? And

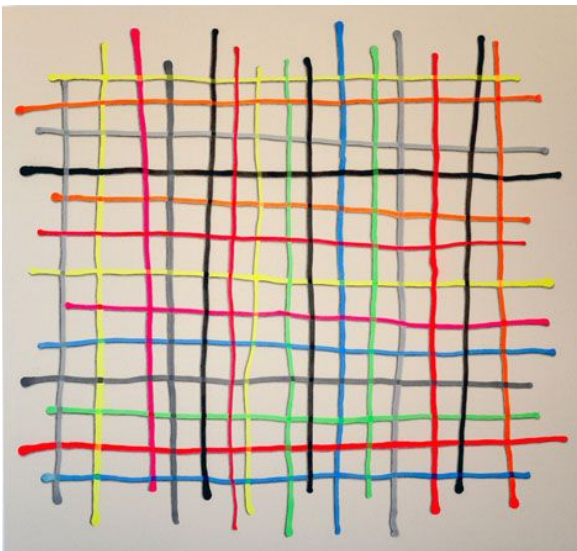
what happens when we let go of our filters and expectations?



Tom Mueske, *Untitled Installation* 2009. Courtesy: Sonce Alexander Gallery

The signature piece of this collection is no doubt a large quilt-like arrangement of bright vertical and horizontal lines intermixed with a sprinkling of darker ones (all drawn with spray paint). In *Grid* (2014), its lines are not perfect nor are they meant to be. The grid structure of the image harkens back to the grids of Mondrian and Malevich, but here, Mueske's neon lines extend into the viewer's space and seem to shift and vibrate before your very eyes.

Mueske's canvas is living and breathing.



Tom Mueske, *Grid*, 2014. Courtesy: Sonce Alexander Gallery

Mueske builds upon and updates the megalithic and sometimes static tradition of Modernism. By using bold and bright colors created with everyday materials, he enriches and makes his own mark upon this aesthetic that has been handed down to him from the artistic greats. Mueske seems to do the impossible in making something so established as Abstract Expressionism feel fresh and original.



Tom Mueske, *Scroll*, 2014. Courtesy: Sonce Alexander Gallery



Tom Mueske, *Untitled (Enamels)*, 2014. Courtesy: Sonce Alexander Gallery

See “Tom Mueske: Recent Works” through August 14, 2014
Sonce Alexander Gallery
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Los Angeles, CA 90034