

about abstraction

New Approaches by Contemporary Artists

Allie Rex

Brooklyn, New York, artist Allie Rex (b. 1980) creates decorative wall installations from painted Mylar cutouts that are assembled, layered, and pinned to the gallery walls. In *Where Does it Come From, Where Does It Go?* vibrant shapes playfully meander and float across the white wall. Brightly colored loops and puffy forms suggest an almost childlike rendering of abstract clouds and flowers with the occasional rainbow. These overlapping forms appear as separate, individual works or are composed as part of a larger grouping assembled on-site by the artist.

Using the gallery walls in place of paper or canvas, Rex creates her abstract compositions through a combination of materials (colored pencil, ink, acrylic, vinyl, and Mylar) and process (drawing, cutting, and painting). She mounts her finished mixed-media abstractions on the wall with pins, where light and shadow adds an additional sculptural component to the work.

Rex presents the newest incarnation of *Where Does it Come From, Where Does It Go?*, which has had several manifestations before its most recent configuration in Salina. For each installation the artist reuses past components of her pieces and recombines these into fresh patterns, with new additions, to create the final composition. While perhaps suggesting a moment of existential questioning or youthful angst, the title, according to Rex, refers to the physical and formal practicalities of how her abstractions should be arranged as well as their history within past works.

She suggests the open-ended possibilities and layered meanings in these abstractions, which drift between pop imagery, everyday objects, and pure formalism. In describing her work, Rex states, "The field of pink hearts stopped being hearts and started being petals or arrows or people. They stop being symbols and start being colors." With a subtle sense of humor and mock naiveté, Rex subverts the masculinity and weighty issues associated with earlier generations of abstract artists for an approach to contemporary abstraction that is light, cheerful, and pretty.

Allie Rex / *Where Does It Come From, Where Does It Go #3 (Big Rainbow)*, 2007
Courtesy Byron Cohen Gallery

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