

SHANNON FINLEY: "Review: Specters into Signals"

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In his first solo show in Berlin, the Canadian artist, Shannon Finley, exhibits some thirteen works all created with the same technique. It is precisely his technique that makes Finley's bright and colorful schemes so enthralling. Layer by layer, acrylic and paint are overlaid on the canvases to create translucent, collage-like formations.

The multi-colored, geometrical shapes are seemingly holographic and reminiscent of light refracted through a prism. The multiple layers are sometimes visible, sometimes opaque, thus lending the works a slight trompe l'oeil character, as details appear three-dimensional at times. Adding to the paintings' plasticity is the fact that the sides of the canvases reveal traces of the different layers of paint used, while surprising colors are often not retraceable on the canvas' front.

The transitions between shapes and colors and the strong contrasts of glossy and matt, bright fluorescent or even glitter irritate the eye. Yet the abstract schemes demand closer investigation and captivate the viewer with their strong evocative power. Albeit the fact that the same technique is used in all of the works, the paintings are not repetitive.

While certain shapes evoke specters of video game cyber-beasts, others echo early Russian constructivism or Josef Albers' color studies. Another field of reference conjured up by the paintings is that of mysticism and shamanic ritual arts which translates Finley's paintings to an almost spiritual realm.