

Gina Jones
2007

"My work seeks to extend the viewing experience, which ultimately invites contemplation."

Gina Jones, 2007.

Using laser-cut steel, sandblasted Perspex and LED lights, Gina Jones binds traditions of De Stijl, Bauhaus, Minimalism and Light Art to create works with a complexity that belies their apparent simplicity. Solid rectilinear forms and negative spaces delicately reveal light that changes colour, as though the works are slowly and rhythmically breathing.

Since Einstein solved the mystery of light in 1905, the new technology revolutionised the world, from lighting homes to corporate signage. Light pioneers in fine art, like Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Thomas Wilfred, illustrated the great elementary attraction this medium had for artists and audience alike. Since then, art has increasingly turned from the illusionary representation of natural light (as in painting) to the real application of artificial light. Gina Jones both draws upon and develops these traditions by tying static form to kinetic elements. The restrained compositions of rectilinear forms pit positive and negative spaces against gloss and matt surfaces. Yet, what particularly draws and holds the viewers attention is the absence of solid material in Jones' surfaces where pulsing light emerges. A trompe l'oeuil effect occurs, where the broken surface tension responds to the viewer's concentration on either light or form. However, colour contrasts and the illusion of receding and advancing planes are meant not to deceive the eye as much as to challenge the viewer's faculties of visual reception. This shift in emphasis from artist's volition to response engineered by the viewer is the philosophical root of Gina Jones' practice.

Throughout her recently completed Master's degree in Fine Arts (from RMIT in Melbourne), Gina's architectural training directed her to use materials sympathetic to both architecture and fine art: laser cut steel, glass or Perspex and even the New Zealand classic, corrugated iron. Despite the coldness of these materials, the warm (and mesmerising) pulsing light balances each work.

As with the traditions of abstract painting, Gina's focus on time and space and the necessity of pausing seeks to draw a more intense viewing experience. Enough time spent in this exhibition brings on a sense of relaxation and timelessness, where one feels impelled to experience the luscious colours beating through their colour range again and again. Because, although you know the colour is changing, it occurs so smoothly it defies conscious registry and so a synaesthetic response to the primary light colours occurs, extending the viewing experience beyond the merely visual. Light Art has always sought to illuminate the phenomenon of light from a scientific, philosophical and art historical perspective. Gina Jones is no exception.

Since graduating from RMIT, Gina has been selected as a finalist in the 2006 Norsewear and Trust Waikato Contemporary Art Awards.

We are delighted also, in this exhibition, to unveil Gina's permanent installation in the Gallery and invite you to view it.

James Blackie