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Too Clever by Half

By [Douglas Crane](#) | 14 Jul, 2008

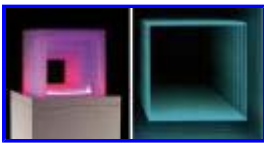
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Gina Jones opened at Page Blackie on 24 June, with a body of work displaying a strong architectural and fine arts feel utilising abstractionism as its base. This invariably lends itself to reflection or in Jones' words contemplation – a reflection that brings a sense of tranquility within some. Gina Jones is a Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology masters graduate who initially showed her work at The Wellington Arts Centre, and these works are a continuation of what was formed from her studies. The show is well manicured and utilises artists' models and theoretical conceptual models to a freighting degree. But do not let this be a barrier for contemplation to understanding what could be best described as SIA (Smart Intelligent Art). Art that can communicate on a range of levels to a wide audience giving something to everyone, what are the chances! However, the ideas are not original, but cleverly packaged.

If one were to draw on the compositional elements used in this art making practice. Light is the key within these works. Light transcends colour and colour dictates mood. The light that creates the colour that leads to mood ensures that the colour is not static in a number of works, thereby changing the mood. Blue turns to red and red to green as examples of the type of activity occurring within the works. The light is changed through the use of a power box. The materials used range from laser cut steel, glass or Perspex and even the New Zealand classic, corrugated iron.

This is evident in the work that is in the front window, a large geometric multi layered work of white sheets of plastic material that have squares cut in the middle of them that recede back through the layers and it is here that the light and colour is present. The work is also subject to wind, which enables the work to sway and thus giving it another dimension for contemplation. A discussion on opening night for some led to the scale of this work, which might probably cause issues of where to hang it if one were to purchase it!



Another geometric work consisted of a couple of layers of glass placed on top of each other that have light projected through the middle represented in squares that recede back through the glass creating perspective and infinity. The work was popular on opening night for it also had a very practical use as a mirror!

A couple of works consisting of glass boxes within glass boxes that progressively shrunk created a kind of frame through which one could look through giving one a view with a frame that could kind of remind one of Marcel Duchamp's work *The Large Glass* (1915-23) for some reason. The view can be dictated by where the work would be placed.

Some of the works could give some a sixties flashback feel. One can be reminded of lava lamps and the shapes and forms that can be created in them and this is evident in three large works positioned on the wall in the centre of the gallery.

There are a number of works that are not as complex and consist of black squares that have a line cut through them through which the light is illuminated from behind. These works to a large degree utilising the minimalist principals of negative and positive space.

One thinks of works by Ralph Hotere as a possible inspiration for this work - perhaps his piece *Orange* (2003) serves as an initial reference point. The reference to artist models of some kind is something that also appears in earlier works by Jones such as *Untitled (After Aranui)* 2007. Jones' artist statement eludes to the traditions of De Stijl, Bauhaus, Minimalism and Light Art and the works present in this exhibition are certainly true to this. However, through all this miasma, I look forward to seeing the real Gina Jones coming through. The exhibition runs to 19 July.

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