

Sumiye Okoshi

The paintings of Sumiye Okoshi play opposites against each other in a way that pays tribute not to a sense of tension in nature but rather to a sense of its subtle rhythm.

Their most pervasive feature are rows of little ovals, relentlessly neat rows cut out of rice paper and glued to the surface of canvas first layered with oil paint. Okoshi may have mottled or washed the little pieces of paper with acrylic paint beforehand, but most of the ovals are cut from solid colors right out of the package. Their placement forms an inviolable grid, but their color and texture break free of the regularity the grid imposes.

Having restricted herself to such a limited means of expression, Okoshi may then overlay the grid with bold strokes of acrylic paint. Liberated gesture, like calligraphy, at once defies yet is subsumed by the grid. The water-based acrylic paint is absorbed by the rice paper yet rejected by the oil paint.

Grid and gesture. Oil and water. Reasoned order and calligraphy. Stasis and movement. Particle and wave. The impatience that marks life in her adopted city of New York is mitigated by the long hours Okoshi spends in her studio patiently cutting and gluing paper imported from her Japanese homeland.

Okoshi takes her inspiration from the sounds of nature, the sounds of wind and waterfalls, and most especially rain. Her works shimmer like reflections in water or stars clustered in the vast night sky. With the simplest of means they expand to embrace the sensory link between sound and image, touch and image.

They are poetic invocations of nature's veiled structures, perched on the border where the ethereal and the substantial coalesce, and they are offered in gentle, modulated tones. They whisper.

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