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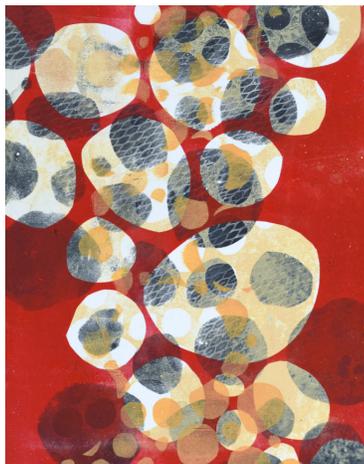
Arts-Entertainment

Source Picks

'Split Complementary – Color-Baked Monotypes' Exhibit to Open June 26th at 81C

June 21, 2021

81C is honored to announce a full-scale art exhibition of abstract works, with an opening celebration event on Saturday, June 26th, at its downtown location on Strand Gade in historic Charlotte Amalie. The featured art exhibition showcases artist Laurie Smithwick and is entitled *Split Complementary – Color-Baked Monotypes*. The St. Thomas Historical Trust will join 81C in celebration at this event.



Artwork titled BRB Todd G by Laurie Smithwick (Submitted photo)

Show description:

During artist Laurie Smithwick's first visit to St. Thomas, she roamed the streets of town, stunned by the saturated colors in every out-of-the-way spot her wandering took her. What struck her were the unique combinations — on churches, gates, storefronts, and homes; blues and oranges, purples and pinks, reds and turquoises, all shouting for attention regardless of how tucked away they may have been. By the end of day four, she had taken over three hundred photographs. She realized she was collecting the colors of Charlotte Amalie, colors she has now reproduced in her monotype prints that make up *Split-Complementary – Color-Baked Monotypes*. Each print was inspired by a single photograph of a specific building — some may be recognizable, and some may be perfectly new, but they all add up to that familiar color-soaked feeling you'll recognize as quintessentially historic Charlotte Amalie. – The Curators, 81C

A note on the colors of historic Charlotte Amalie:

“Contrary to popular belief, the historic color schemes of the Danish West Indies are deeply rooted in a conservative palette, much like the Danes themselves. Ochre hues, shades of gray, colonial red, whitewash as a base color as well as trim popular with Georgian Colonial architecture. Louvered jalousies in hunter green and shutters painted in black, white, castile red, dark wood tones, browns, and hunter green. Early writings and engravings about the town spoke and illustrated this. If you were to squint your eyes and sail into the harbor of Charlotte Amalie, you would know that you were there because of the city being built on three distinctive hills divided by two gutters then divided into quarters (Danish subdivisions) painted in white and pale colors with red roofs. Similar to the same feeling one would have sailing into the New York City harbor and seeing the Statue of Liberty. Its appearance is iconic. In the 1970s, famed Puerto Rican preservationist Ricardo Alegria, introduced to the revitalization of historic Old San Juan a similar color scheme with all raised surfaces painted white and shutters in black. It took Caribbean historic towns by storm as the new design aesthetic. The late Edith Woods, first lady of historic preservation in the Virgin Islands, during her tenure on the Historic Preservation Commission ushered in a new palette for the Charlotte Amalie architectural control district, still used by the Commission today. The colors honor our historic past and offer tasteful tones like pale greens, aquatic blues, warm oranges and peach among others for classic Georgian Colonial architecture our 17th-century seaport is famous for.” – Felipe Ayala

Portrait of artist Laurie Smithwick (Submitted photo)

Artist statement:

“After a career as a graphic designer, disciplined by rules: grids, letterforms, hierarchies, and construction, I experienced a shift, a transition to the intangible. Abstract art has taught me to embrace unpredictability and abandon perfectionism. Now I explore the tension between order and disorder; rules and intuition. I find myself consumed with the equilibrium created by opposing forces, balance being the consistency throughout the exploration of abstraction. My work introduces structures that would never be able to balance in the real world but in the context of my artwork they perform the impossible.” - Laurie Smithwick

About the artist:

Laurie Smithwick is an abstract painter and printmaker working primarily in monotypes, acrylics, and watercolors. She was born and raised in Charlotte, NC, where she began practicing as an artist and designer as soon as she could hold a pencil. She studied art and creative writing at Duke University, and graphic design and photography at Parsons School of Design. Her design work earned her a Grammy nomination, and she has delivered a TEDx talk on the genesis of ideas. Laurie has exhibited in New York, Raleigh, and Charlotte, and held her first solo show in 2018. Her abstract work reveals her devotion to color, tension, and hierarchy, as well as the balance between rules and intuition.

Event details: Laurie Smithwick – Split Complementary – Color-Baked Monotypes. Exhibition opening event date and time: Saturday, June 26, 2021, 7 p.m. to 12 a.m. Celebration, party, art gallery event.

Location: 81C – Downtown Charlotte Amalie. Strand Gade between waterfront and Market Square. Right around the corner from Moe's Grocery on the waterfront. Visit www.81CVI.com for a map link. Or google 81C Virgin Islands.

81C Art Gallery in Charlotte Amalie (Submitted photo)

Parking and other info: Park on the waterfront. Covid-19 capacity regulations will be observed. Face masks are required to enter the event. Drinks will be available for suggested donation and Hors d'oeuvres will be passed. Liquor sponsors include West Indies Corporation. Please drink responsibly.

Gallery hours: The exhibition will be on display for two weeks and viewings are available by both public walk-in and private appointment. Gallery hours are 12 p.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, beginning June 28. Art sales contact person: Joseph Hewes (340) 244-5056; Publicity contact person: Zack Zook (917) 327-1561.

About 81C: 81C is a newly opened event venue in historic downtown featuring a pop-up event space and art gallery. The space is available for private and public pop-up event rentals. 81C was launched by entrepreneur Zack Zook after several years of renovation and restoration to the (circa 1810) building located at 81C Kronprindsens Gade. The space is currently operated by Joseph Hewes, Augustin Kelvin Holder, and Zack Zook.

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