



True Lines

Trudy Benson, Rico Gatson, Tracy Thomason, and Russell Tyler
Exhibition Dates: 22 August – 20 September 2020



Trudy Benson *Uptop*, 2019. Acrylic and oil on canvas. 109.2 x 119.4 cm. 43 x 47 in. Courtesy of the Artist.

Lines create the potential for mystery - they delineate, circumscribe, overlap, separate. Like runes, they are heavy with meaning. Each conceives a new form, a new space, in turn offering a distinct spiritual experience. *True Lines* presents a collection of abstract paintings by artists employing line as a means of meditation on form, symbolism, and the lived experience. Rejecting the Formalist dismissal of reference and emotional expression, Trudy Benson, Rico Gatson, Tracy Thomason, and Russell Tyler, create abstract compositions in a pulsating, spiritual, and sometimes allegorical fashion, overlapping and layering meaning through abstract symbols and pregnant forms.

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Trudy Benson's paintings are about materiality as much as they are about imagery. The viewer is offered a legible and maximal first read of the paintings with the material and process revealing themselves as they draw nearer. Benson creates depth and indicates process by layering and varying paint application - inspired by the effects of cut-paper collage. Thinking takes place on the surface of the canvas, and decisions are apparent with confident lines dominating the foreground. The paintings are maximal, expressive, and tangible - meditating between material, line, surface, and depth.

Rico Gaston's work straddles formalist abstraction and social commentary. Gatson's paintings in the exhibition are each divided into equal and unifying quadrants by implied lines. In two of the works an X is formed on the picture plane - the integration of which is by design both passive and active - representing danger, death, transformation and virtue. A third painting is divided with single central horizontal and vertical lines creating a cross, with a circular layout of colorful geometric shapes in black, white, red, orange, yellow and green radiating concentric rings from the center outward. The layout is reminiscent of the cross hairs of a gun scope or a target. In these works, Gatson seeks to illuminate specific aspects of the African American experience and history while, also balancing the unconscious realms, meditation and spirituality.

Tracy Thomason's marks fluctuate between the quick stabs of stone carving tools, knife slices, and the gentle insistence of a powdery drawn line. Sculpted abstract glyphs are applied in meditation, pulling the works out of abstraction and a new language of form and symbols of off-primary colors. Thomason's works are created with paint and marble dust hand-mixed into a clay-like material that is carefully applied to linen surfaces with both brushes and surgical blades. Drawing attention to the relationship between forms and negative space, Thomason creates shapes and lines that reference the female body or spiritual landscapes.

Russell Tyler's abstract landscapes similarly hint at unconscious realms, spirituality, and the 1970s sci-fi conceptualization of Utopia. Ranging from pure geometric forms to the repetition of organic, amoeba-like lines in bright pops of color, Tyler plays off the language of formal abstraction. He paints from memory creating psychological landscapes that reconstruct mountains, horizons and hues, embodying atmosphere and an energy of equilibrium.

About the Artists

Trudy Benson (b. 1985, Virginia, USA) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, USA. She received her MFA from the Pratt Institute (Brooklyn) and BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University (Richmond). Previous solo exhibitions include Team bungalow (Los Angeles), Lyles & King (New York), Ceysson & Bénétière (Paris), Ribordy Thetaz (Geneva), Half Gallery (New York) and Dio Horia (Mykonos). Her work is in the collections of Susan and Michael Hort (New York), Beth Rudin DeWoody (New York), Aishti Foundation (Beirut), Saatchi Gallery (London), Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Arts (Peekskill), among others. Trudy Benson is represented in New York by Lyles and King.



Rico Gatson (b. 1966 Georgia, USA) received his undergraduate degree from Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1989 and his MFA from the Yale School of Art, New Haven Connecticut, in 1991. Gatson's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including exhibitions at The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY; The Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; The Essl Museum, Austria, Vienna and The Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC. In 2019 completed a large commission for MTA Arts and Design titled "Beacons"; eight permanent large-scale mosaics of prominent figures associated with and installed in a subway station in the Bronx. His work is featured in the permanent collections of The Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Denver Art Museum, The Cheekwood Museum, The Kempner Museum and The Yale University Art Gallery. His work is also included in numerous private collections. Gatson is a faculty member at the School of Visual Arts and New York University and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, USA.

Tracy Thomason (b. 1984, Maryland, USA) received her MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, MI and her B.F.A. at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, MD. She is represented by Marinaro Gallery in New York, NY with her solo exhibition reviewed in publications such as the New Yorker and Forbes. Additional reviews have included The Financial Times, Artsy, The New York Observer, The Brooklyn Rail, and a mention in Art in America. She has been interviewed for Blouin Artinfo, Artsy, and The Sound and Vision Podcast. Her work has been featured in select group exhibitions such as Andr en-Schiptjenko in Stockholm, Brennan & Griffin and Asya Geisberg Gallery in New York and a NADA Projects solo exhibition booth. Thomason was a 2018 recipient of the Marie Walsh Sharpe Studio Program in New York, NY and received a Joan Mitchell Foundation Scholarship to attend The Atlantic Center for the Artist Residency in 2010. Recently Thomason was the Fall 2019 Artist in Resident at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville working with both Graduate and Undergraduate students with prior experience as a lecturer at Brooklyn College and The University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA for Painting and Drawing.

Russell Tyler (b. 1981, Tennessee, USA) received his M.F.A. from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and his B.F.A. from Concordia University in Montreal. He has had solo exhibitions at Richard Heller Gallery in Los Angeles, Denny Dimin Gallery in New York, Galerie Bernard Ceysson in France, Ribordy Contemporary in Switzerland, DCKT Contemporary in New York City, Freight + Volume in New York City, Alon Segev Gallery in Tel Aviv, Gordon Gallery 2 in Tel Aviv, and EbersMoore Gallery in Chicago. He has been included in group exhibitions at the Savannah College of Art and Design, the Torrance Art Museum, New Britain Museum of American Art, Retrospective Gallery, The Fireplace Project, Ana Cristea Gallery, Thierry Goldberg Gallery and ACME among others. His work has been reviewed or featured in Artforum, Hyperallergic, Modern Painters, T The New York Times Style Magazine, NY Arts Magazine, The Brooklyn Rail and Le Monde.



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