

EQUINOX GALLERY
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Angela Teng: A Coloured Image of the Sun

November 24th to December 22nd, 2018

Equinox Gallery, Vancouver

Reception for the artist: Saturday, November 24th from 2 to 4pm

Equinox Gallery is pleased to present ***A Coloured Image of the Sun***, Angela Teng's third solo exhibition with the gallery. Since graduating from Emily Carr University of Art + Design in 2011, Teng has delved into the nature of paint as a medium, challenged its typical support—the canvas—and scrutinized the character of gesture. Using several distinct methods, Teng typically produces intimately scaled works with a handmade sensibility that brush against the status of the large canvases of twentieth-century (mostly male) abstract expressionists.

A finalist in the 2016 and 2017 RBC Canadian Painting Competitions, Angela Teng has been acknowledged nationwide for her experimentation with the medium, specifically her works made by crocheting with paint, something she taught herself to do based on YouTube videos. After squeezing and drying lengths of different coloured paints into thin strips which approximate yarn, Teng uses a single hook to crochet the paint into rectangular and square compositions. The compositional strategies vary – at times using the looseness of multicoloured concentric squares and at others alternating between the precision of a diagonal split and the optical stimulation of horizontal stripes. As she described in a 2016 interview in *Canadian Art* magazine, “The paintings have the ability to speak to sculpture and painting and feminism—craft, women’s work. ... And there’s still so much within colour, form and gesture that I have yet to explore.” These works elicit a broad range of references, from the colourful, commonplace Afghan throw to the geometric abstraction of high modernism, all while implicating the artistic labour of women that has typically earned the distinction of “craft” rather than “art.”

An entirely different approach to paint’s materiality is evident in Teng’s split monochromes. Here the artist builds up layers of oil paint to create the essence of a single, sweeping performative gesture. Choosing colours for their visceral, historical, or didactic context, she entices further by partially topping the works with flocking of a contrasting colour. Working these differences, the dusting of tiny particles of fibre produces a tactility that is softer in gesture than the hard and impenetrable paint surface beneath it. Simultaneously, this delicateness adds a further value that is reminiscent of cherished domestic objects such as laced textiles, velvety wallpaper, or even the fluffy “snow” deposited on a Christmas tree.

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In a third, ongoing body of work, the artist challenges the medium even further. For these paintings, Teng uses linen or cotton to first crochet the “canvas,” spending up to one hundred hours just on the creation of this unique physical support. She then pushes paint through the holes in the crocheted structure from the back, having limited control of the paint as it oozes through. Here the act of painting is relatively quick and spontaneous compared to the labour-intensive material that is being acted upon. Through such inversions of value and the incorporation of the rich history of textiles, the artist calls into question the normative foundations of what painting is and, by extension, its hierarchical place in visual art.

In the context of today’s world, fuelled by speed and efficiency, Angela Teng challenges such prized qualities by purposely slowing down her practice through laborious techniques, mindfully producing smaller works, and being attentive to all the materials in her studio (including leftovers), bolstered by an attitude that is always inquisitive and analytical. Her contemporary engagement with the ancient medium of painting has led to her inclusion in many group exhibitions across Canada and in New York, Chicago, and Portland, including the Vancouver Art Gallery’s *Vancouver Special* triennial and the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria’s *It’s in the Making*, both in 2016.

Angela Teng lives and works in Vancouver.