

artillery

Pick of the Week: Heather Day, Diane Rosenstein Gallery

By Cole Sweetwood | October 7, 2020



Heather Day, *The Persistence of Memory*, 2020 (©Heather Day)

You never really know which exhibition is going to make you cry. I certainly didn't expect it to happen at Heather Day's "Ricochet" at the Diane Rosenstein Gallery. None of the work was particularly sad and I actually had low expectations based on what I saw online. I remember I had even bemoaned to my editor; would this show just be another contemporary artist pining after AbEx?

Yet from *The Persistence of Memory* to *Fever Dream*, I could tell that Day was not pining after anything. Instead, she had cracked open the very center of her mind and laid it out on canvas for us all to see. Her works are free and expressive, with large fields of flooded pigment acting as the backdrop for floating ribbons of paint. They are chaotic and improvisational reflections of her inner world—her "mind maps," as Day calls them.

And like any good map, they are also well-planned. Every stroke of paint falls just so, every flood of pigment only extends so far. These discrete elements work in harmony like dancers in perfect choreography; responding to one another, forming and disintegrating, flowing around each and every line.

These two poles of Day's work—deliberate planning and improvisational chaos—do not necessarily explain my strong emotional reaction to her work. I've had a lot of difficulty putting my reaction into words, but I can share these few connections I forged in the hope that you'll forge them too.

Day's paintings show the entire spectrum of universal experience. They are fetuses forming in the womb; stars collapsing in on themselves. They are embryonic, and they are nebulous. I cried while walking through "Ricochet" because I was looking at art which so strongly reminded me of the beautiful, mystical and sometimes terrifying knowledge that I am alive.

I can't promise you'll have the same experience as me, nor can I promise that you won't cry, but I can promise you that "Ricochet" will still be rebounding in your mind for days and days.