

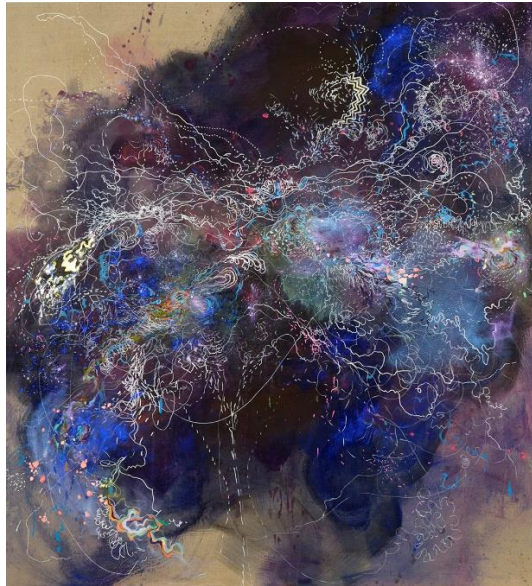
Cosmic Energy and Coastal Birds: Two Exhibitions in Texas

by William Sarradet for Glasstire, July 6, 2024

Jackie Tileston: Just This at Holly Johnson Gallery, June 22 – September 28, 2024



(left) Jackie Tileston, "Forgetting of the forgetting," 2023, oil, acrylic, gouache, collage on linen.



(Right) Jackie Tileston, "Frequencies for a State Change," 2023, oil, acrylic, enamel, marker, glitter, pigment on linen

Jackie Tileston's latest exhibition, *Just This*, at Holly Johnson Gallery in Dallas, presents a captivating array of new paintings and works on paper that invite viewers into a realm where meditation and trance techniques converge through the lens of automatic drawing. This exhibition showcases Tileston's ability to transform her practices into topographic energy maps of unknown realms, where visual expressions of cosmic play and sound waves emerge from a field of potential.

Tileston's work draws from the nondual traditions of ancient India, where consciousness is seen as the fundamental essence of the universe. Her paintings and drawings explore this concept, depicting how a unified field of blissful awareness vibrates and separates into infinite points of individual perspectives. Through her art, Tileston asks whether "deep perceiving" can catalyze experiences of non-ordinary states of consciousness and if these experiences can help evolve new paradigms of interconnectedness.

The exhibition features mixed media works on linen, predominantly employing oil and acrylic, with gouache and marker making occasional appearances. Tileston's intricate networks of media and line, set against their gray linen underpinnings, effectively convey the complexity of energy applied in space. The diversity in her color palette is equally beguiling, with no two pieces following the same color quanta. The collection ranges from dark to bright, and one-piece bursts with ecstatic pink. Clouds of aura bubble as brushstrokes stipple atop, evoking a sense of cosmic energy.

Tileston's background as a "third culture kid," having lived in the Philippines, India, England, France, and the U.S., informs her layered and contemplative paintings. This sense of belonging everywhere and nowhere creates a unique pictorial vocabulary and symbolism that permeates her work. One cannot help but wonder if Tileston has ever dreamed of visiting the Large Hadron Collider or ITER, as her work seems to mirror the intricate and mysterious forces of the universe.

Zeke Williams: Bird Rights, at the Galveston Arts Center, April 27 – July 7, 2024



(left) Zeke Williams, "Cattle Egret," 2024, oil on CNC carved birch plywood, red oak frame
(right) Zeke Williams, "Snow Egret," 2024, oil on CNC carved birch plywood, red oak frame

Zeke Williams' exhibition *Bird Rights* at the Galveston Arts Center is an example of his approach to painting: blending traditional and contemporary techniques to create substantial work that makes the most of material. These pieces, though referred to as paintings, are in fact intricate constructions of carved birch plywood. Utilizing a CNC machine, Williams paints and carves the wood, but leaves parts of the plywood exposed, lending a rustic quality to the work not unlike many of the built, coast-weathered surfaces in Galveston.

Williams' choice of colors is consistent with his previous works, employing jewel tones and bright, analogous palettes that fill the tiled backgrounds. This vibrant backdrop serves as a canvas for the textured birds, which are often adorned with patterns of parallel lines and simple geometric forms. The birds contrast against their colorful surroundings, framed by the bold hues that encircle them.

The scale of these pieces is large and prompts curiosity about Williams' process and the thematic grouping of the birds. Further inspection reveals that they are species found in Texas, with many of them inhabiting coastal and wetland areas. The works are notably heavy, and sometimes feel like reclaimed sections of another building. While Williams has previously focused on landscapes (a recent series highlights national parks), this exhibition shifts to fauna, maintaining his connection to natural themes.

The Galveston Arts Center's Dennis Nance continues to curate smart exhibitions of serious contemporary art that resonate with its coastal, local audience, which is often accustomed to (and bombarded with) a kitschy beach aesthetic. *Bird Rights* exemplifies the Center's commitment to showcasing artists who push beyond these conventions and offer fresh and compelling perspectives on art.

William Sarradet is the Assistant Editor for Glasstire.

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