



Margo Sawyer - *Synchronicity* at Holly Johnson Gallery

by J. Claiborne Bowdon

Margo Sawyer's latest exhibition at Holly Johnson Gallery, titled "Synchronicity," is the latest segment of a series of work titled "Synchronicity of Color" that the artist has produced over the last twenty-five years. The underlying inspiration for this body of work is a continuing exploration of the psychiatrist Carl Jung's concept of coincidence- specifically, the unexpected encounter of unrelated elements that is, nonetheless, meaningful. The unseen, unknown- potentially even unknowable-underlying forces that produce these events fascinated Jung, as they do

Sawyer. Her exploration of this takes the form of colors (some solid, some blended just enough to reveal the colors that created them) placed in correlated sequences to quiet our minds and better hear their secretive whispers to each other. Though, even if you believe you have found the ties that bind, Sawyer adds an element that eludes even our finer senses; some things can only be felt.

Even Isaac Newton's color wheel can only take you so far. Newton developed this visual representation of the color spectrum in the late 17th century, and- rather than laying each color progression in a straight line- he formed it into a circle to fully communicate the relationships between each color no matter their position- red becomes orange, and orange to yellow, to green, to blue, purple, and finally back to red. The genius of it is the relationship it shows in reading left to right around the circle, but especially in the relationships it also shows by counting outwards or looking across to show how even red and green share a symbiotic connection. It is similar to how the rhythm of a poem intones the words with greater significance and through its music eliminates the need for obvious relationship of rhyme. Sawyer also places her colors in a form that can be read in a left to right round-shaped direction but adds in a jarring juxtaposition that can hardly explain itself- in a spectrum of red there's suddenly cobalt blue or yellow in a non-sequential gradation of purple to pink. The relationships-the coincidence of their placement -are extended further apart with less to bridge the gap to invite further speculation and contemplation.

The size, depth, and positioning of the panels also work to hold each at arm's length. It is made clear that they constitute the work while remaining distinct, independent actors in it rather than a tidy chain, which furthers the need to examine their relationship to one another. Typically, the works in a gallery show have an underlying relationship to each other, but this is a rare opportunity to see work that directly relates to the work around it. One reflective piece is composed of two vertical rectangles-one copper-colored and the other reflective as a mirror. As you move from one side of it to the other the pieces on the opposite wall come into view and become part of this work, and you may even see yourself in it. The exhibition is open through July 27