

Modular Meaning, The art of Andrée-Anne Dupuis Bourret

Proliferations, the title of this exhibition by Andrée-Anne Dupuis Bourret, conveys the rapid growth or multiplication of parts. It is apt, since Dupuis Bourret works in multiple units of paper that are screen printed, cut and folded. In prior installations the work has spread out vigorously across the gallery floor and ascended the walls, like an organized but unpredictable growth. For *Eastern Edge*, the artist intends to fashion a cloud of suspended modules, with perhaps a few modules waiting patiently on the floor. The geometric, repeated shape suggests a multiplicity of associations. They can be seen as organic, like the cells of a honeycomb or perhaps a biological, irregular structure of cells. Think of a subtle pattern with its own logic, say a cross between a zebra and a UPC barcode. The paper units also evoke the pixilated, low-resolution reality of the digital world. The work is its own visual language or aesthetic information, both mechanical and handmade, as we perceive it.

In designing the shape of the module, Dupuis Bourret is "interested in how to produce organic forms from geometric shapes." She points out that "modules refer to all units that compose our material and immaterial reality: physical matter (atoms), biological (cell), textile (fiber), picture (pixel, dot), etc." But that is not all. The modules are also an abstract form of data that makes sense both as a context and as a configuration.

Creating them with the help of tools – but still largely by hand – the modules also provide the artist with "a reflection on repetition and iteration." Dupuis Bourret explains that, "For several years, I have been inspired by the theory of Fractals of Mandelbrot and many theories in architecture and design about ornamentation." In short, Dupuis Bourret takes interest in how we create meaning from details that surround us.

It might be possible to regard the units that Dupuis Bourret manipulates as the grid of a curious map. To which terrain does this map hold the answers? Is it a device to guide us to an imagined world of the artist? Is it an exterior projection of the interior?

Dupuis Bourret has said that she is interested in "the threshold between real space and imaginary space." She is what I call an artist of the liminal, comfortable balancing between two points on either side of the threshold. Previously, Dupuis Bourret has explained that she is attracted to the movement between "externality and interiority, a circulation between the outside and the thought." She constructs from paper a rite of passage. In that way, her installations are like a ritual world into which she invites the viewers.

In her brief proposal for this show, the artist wrote, "The exhibition *Proliferations* explores new modes of spatial occupation for printed surface by questioning the way in which tools, interfaces and devices change our individual perceptions of the world."

Characterized by hybridity, Dupuis Bourret's art straddles both printmaking and sculpture. Flat, printed paper is meticulously folded into three-dimensional building units. It is a paper-based medium of surface and form that is most noteworthy for the way it occupies space. Ambiguously, *Proliferations* inhabits the gallery on both sides of several boundaries. It is, as Dupuis Bourret says, an "interface" that navigates a fertile tension between printmaking/sculpture, real/imaginary, external/internal, outside/thought.

The viewer does not need to choose, but can experience them all like the courses of an elaborate meal. Andrée-Anne Dupuis Bourret offers you a menu of delights: optical, haptic, and kinesthetic. Where will you start?

- Gloria Hickey, 2014