

Anne Patterson opens the doors of perception in two powerful exhibits

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New York City-based artist Anne Patterson paints, sculpts and creates large-scale installations. Her work is sensational - literally. Pattern is a synesthete: she hears colors and sees sounds. That perceptual crossover informs her art, from color spaces of the mind created by rainbows of hanging ribbons, to energetic creations of wire resembling the paths of subatomic particles, to painterly vortices of her whirlpool watercolors. Here in Sarasota, you can see Patterson's work at the "Pathless Woods" installation at The Ringling and the "Aridesence" exhibition at Alfstad& Contemporary. We recently spoke about the perceptual and conceptual foundation of her work. Here are her insights:

Artistic intention

My intention is to take people outside themselves; to create a moment where they see something beautiful and think about nothing else. Ideally, my art will be the catalyst for a transcendent experience. That may sound a little arrogant, but that's what I'm hoping for.

Line, space and color

Line is about getting from one place to another. It can be a straight line, a curved line, a pathway, a length of wire, or a beam of light. When I think of space, I think of openness. Where line is restrictive or directional, space has limitless

possibilities; it's up to you to create your own direction. Color means energy. It's where I get the emotion of a piece. Color is primal; it bypasses the intellect and speaks to the heart directly.

Impact of synesthesia on her artwork

When I listen to music, especially classical music, I see colors, shapes and spatial relationships. While creating my artwork in my studio, I'll listen to music constantly. It might be Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring," or Mozart's "Requiem." The music plays and I see the music - and I put that into my work. If there's a flowing passage in the music, I might make a sweeping arc. For a staccato section, I might create lots of little loops and curlicues. There's no exact formula; it's what I see and feel in the moment.

Execution and experience

"Pathless Woods" was very labor intensive. There's no randomness to the execution! I used a grand total of 8,472 satin ribbons. Every ribbon is laid out exactly where it's supposed to be. The darker colors on the left; bright blues and greens on the right; hotter reds in the center. The colors have their own logic, like motifs in a symphony-but it's a symphony you can see. The piece works because of the clear structure underlying it. You sense that structure intuitively and feel free to get lost in the work.

The big picture

My senses cross. I think my art crosses, too. Each individual work of art I've created is connected to every other work. My wire pieces and ribbon pieces at Alfstad& Contemporary are all variations on the theme I explored in my "Pathless Woods" installation. Many of the paintings you'll see at Alfstad& were inspirations for the colors and some of the layouts of my installation. If my art is like music, each artwork is part of a larger composition - the big picture, if you like. Every single piece I make helps me see the big picture. But it's still a work in progress.