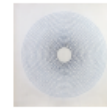


The Sweet Turning of the Page



By [Tara Heuser](#) on Jun 01, 2011 | [Add a Comment](#) (0)



The Washington, DC area is no stranger to colorful abstraction. After all it was this district that produced a group of painters known as the Washington Color School. However, every now and then an artist will put a new spin on geometric abstraction, much like Baltimore based artist Hadieh Shafie. Shafie explores the relationship between text, the body and ornamentation in her solo exhibition “The Sweet Turning of the Page”, currently at Morton Fine Art. The process of repetition is a key element in this show and one that is demonstrated by the numerous hand rolled strips of paper Shafie maneuvers forming intricate circles of color within each work of art. Hadieh Shafie has written the Farsi word for love, or “eshghe”, on each strip of paper. When looking closely at Hadieh Shafie’s works, script and symbols begin to appear inside many of the concentric loops, transforming these shapes into so much more than colorful, geometric designs.

The repetition of a key like shape can be found in varying degrees throughout Hadieh Shafie’s work. The image of a key is often symbolic for unlocking the secrets to something great, possibly unlocking the mystery of Hadieh Shafie’s motifs. This might be partially true, however, Shafie’s main reason for incorporating this particular emblem relates to the fact that “eshghe” in script resembles that of a skeleton key. In certain paintings, such as “Radiate In” and “Radiate Out”, Shafie illustrates this symbol so many times it becomes an abstract pattern, adding a rhythmic quality to her work. Hadieh Shafie likens her repetitive process to a ritualistic performance, such as prayer, made tangible.

Hadieh Shafie’s fascination with the sheer method of making art stems from her Iranian heritage. The elements of repetition and time are ingrained in Islamic art and craft as well as the Sama dance of the whirling dervishes (also echoed in the artist’s use of concentric shapes). Shafie’s palette is as breathtaking as her intricate designs. The vibrant hues of orange and pink that comprise “Still of the Turn” and the rich maroon used in “Keep on Turning” are quite spellbinding. And the interesting facets of Hadieh Shafie’s work are seemingly endless. For instance, the

number of paper scrolls contained in an individual painting makes up the title of the piece. For example, “1890” contains that precise amount of cylindrical rings of paper.

It is hard not to fall in love with Hadieh Shafie’s art. Not only are her pieces aesthetically beautiful, they are inventive and reflective of the artist’s points of interest. If you haven’t had a chance to see “The Sweet Turning of the Page” you still have time to visit Morton Fine Art, as the exhibition will be up through June 3rd.

*The Sweet Turning of the Page showing at Morton Fine Art through June 3rd, 1781
Florida Ave NW, Washington, DC 20009, 202-390-5118, mortonfineart@gmail.com*

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