

Contrasts and connections

"Friendship's Death" is alive with sensuous form and pleasurable color.

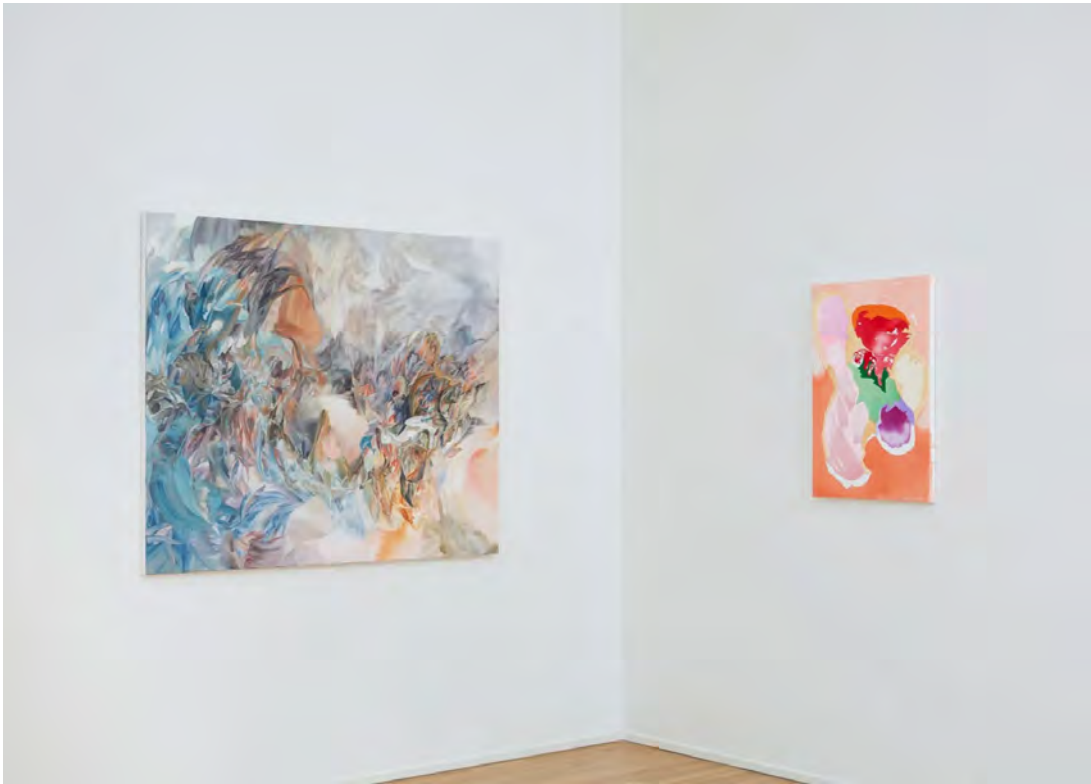
by Alan Pocaro
June 23, 2023



"Friendship's Death" installation view, Andrew Rafacz 2023
Credit: Courtesy Andrew Rafacz

After the velvet curtains close on glistening spring art fairs and innumerable MFA shows, summer's strange pitch descends. The next two months can be slow. Drowsy weekend tranquility punctuated, maybe, by a big name (Van Gogh at the Art Institute!), provocative content (Gary Simmons at the MCA!), or a modest but somehow more satisfying group show featuring five artists whose works, visions, and voices are uniquely abstract. See "Friendship's Death" at Andrew Rafacz.

The show's title, a reference to the eponymous 1987 experimental sci-fi film, is a curious lodestone for an exhibition alive with sensuous form and pleasurable color. The movie's idiosyncratic ending (a series of abstract visuals juxtaposed against clips of an injured soccer player and a developing fetus, among others) is mentioned in the press release but sheds limited, if any, light on paintings by Melanie Authier, Leslie Baum, Judy Dolnick, Magalie Guérin, and Melissa Leandro.



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Courtesy Andrew Rafacz

Setting aside that Leandro's richly woven pieces are maybe more tapestry than painting *per se*, all the pictures on view say more about each other than the show's title ever could. Take Authier's tumescent fields of rippling painterly form, silvery and seemingly nonobjective. Paired with Baum's aqueous, floral-figured close-ups, the Canadian artist's paintings are suddenly verdant landscapes, rolling in midday breeze. Guérin's work, whose thick surfaces often feel so leaden and object-like, similarly opens up in the presence of Dolnick's airy canvases. Thoughtfully curated and replete with animating contrasts and connections, there's nothing dead in this show.

📍 "Friendship's Death"

Through 7/15: Tue-Fri 10 AM-5 PM, Sat 11 AM-5 PM, Andrew Rafacz, 1749 W. Chicago. andrewrafacz.com