



ART + DESIGN

Memory Foam Sculptural Installations Channel Serious ‘80s Vibes

MARCH 26, 2018 by Vasia Rigou

What are the colors of your dreams? Bright orange, deep purple and intense blue? Maybe vivid yellow or lime green? For [Zachary Buchner](#), all the above, and they’re applied onto memory foam surfaces of mostly geometrical compositions, more reminiscent of sculptural installations than paintings. “[Lost in a Dream](#),” the artist’s third exhibition with [Andrew Rafacz](#), turns the gallery space into an almost neon color extravaganza that gives the viewer serious 1980s flashbacks—a time when blindingly bright colors such as hot pink, day glo, yellow, orange and green seemed to be everywhere.

Buchner’s practice does not simply transform raw material into something other. The essence of his creative endeavours lays deeper than color coordination and contrasting shades of blues. Paint—thick brushstrokes that turn different densities into a rainbow of layers, one on top of the other, without mixing them—becomes a pulsing source of energy within the work. Surfaces, varying in thickness, create a three-dimensional illusion that furthers to the initial concept; lines between dream and reality blur.



Zachary Buchner, Lost in a Dream, Untitled (BlueTealWedge)

The Canadian artist and educator, who has also founded [Practise](#), an independently-run, artist-centered exhibition space that adds to a long tradition of alternative spaces in Chicago and beyond, has been widely experimenting with notions of materialism and its ramifications in the arts with work that has been focused on transforming materials (acrylic, plastic) and playing around with the ideas behind them, prompting an critical dialogue in the process. In his latest exhibition, it’s the medium of memory foam that elevates material fetishism to a whole new level. A more intimate look beyond the masterful color palette and the precise geometrical lines reveals yet another level of complexity. Molding to the contours of the body’s natural shape to provide personalized support, absorbing movement and delivering comfort and in some cases even therapeutic pressure relief, memory foam becomes a canvas manipulated to take the form of a sculptural object that is familiar yet distant. It is then nested within an acrylic frame that adds form and structure.

Skillfully balanced between painting and sculpture, soft and firm, diverse forms and elaborate patterns, the exhibition cannot help but suggest that the viewer is not lost in a dream at all. If one manages to quiet the wall works’ wonderfully overwhelming color, it simply takes a moment to realize that what they’re looking at is a mere reflection of themselves.