

Review: Cody Hudson/Andrew Rafacz Gallery

JULY 12, 2013 AT 6:00 AM BY [ART EDITOR](#)



"I Got High and Never Got Back (Revisited)"

RECOMMENDED

Cody Hudson is one of Chicago's most prolific and highly regarded artists. Navigating the murky (and possibly irrelevant) borderlands between fine art and commercial design, Hudson is known for creating everything from one-off bags for Whole Foods to installations and album covers via his design house Struggle Inc. The artist's compositions are clean-cut, chromatically harmonious, and brimming with a laid-back sense of quiet confidence.

For "Salad Days Days" at Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Hudson draws upon his background in graphic media to create a series of paintings that aptly demonstrate simplicity's myriad virtues. Employing a restrained color palette that sticks close to cool blues and greens with the occasional black or golden accent, a single, almost obsessively repeated pear-shaped form dominates these square supports, becoming both figure and ground in works such as the regally hued "I Got High and Never Got Back (Revisited)."



"Mystery of Dub (Chopped and Screwed)"

Frequently, as in the frosty "Mystery of Dub (Chopped and Screwed)," this ubiquitous tear-drop shape pops into the third dimension as a piece of birch pressboard fixed to the painting's surface, engaging a respectful dialog with the synthetic cubism of Braque and Picasso, albeit one that's been filtered through Matisse's crisp sensibilities.

To search for symbolic meaning in this genial exhibition beyond the obvious relationship to the history of art and graphic design would likely be a mistake. Unfortunately, the term decorative has acquired a pejorative connotation over the years, but it's probably the most appropriate description of Hudson's pictures. That's not to suggest that these paintings are trite, or would simply look good on a neck tie—though several probably would—but it's important to recognize that Hudson's background and significant skill as a designer is the overriding force that propels these delightful images. (Alan Pocaro)

Through July 25 at Andrew Rafacz Gallery, 835 West Washington