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Geometric Flower Drawings Are Like Mutating DNA Frozen in Time

Andrew Nunes (/author/AndrewNunes) — Feb 8 2017





Pop Flower 33, Mary Judge, 2016. Images courtesy of the artist and Kenise Barnes Fine Art

With a delicately sensual geometry and symmetry impeccable for something handmade, artist Mary Judge (<http://www.maryjudge.com/>)'s powdered pigment drawings are stunning works of otherworldly cohesive unity (<http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/maggie-west-flowers-hallucinatory-photo-series>). Currently on view at Kenise Barnes Fine Art (<http://www.kbfa.com/>), the artworks in *Polypetalous* feel like disparate strands of DNA (<http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/wear-the-perfect-genes-with-personalized-dna-scarves>), as if every drawing is a genetic permutation (<http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/bioartist-takes-beautiful-macro-photos-of-crystallizing-dna>) of a singular, floral design, adhering to the same base format but with the details within each piece varying tremendously.



Pop Flower W01, Mary Judge, 2016

This seemingly genetic quality isn't accidental; it's precisely in line with Judge's overarching practice and relates to the artists from which she draws her inspiration from: "Limitations can really help the artist, but my artistic formation in the 70s is probably a factor in this repetition of style," Judge tells The Creators Project. "Formal qualities and processes were a strong trend in visual art at the time: Sol Lewitt's work is largely based on this idea of variations on a theme."



Polypetalous Exhibition View, Mary Judge, 2016

To achieve the intricate formal qualities of her works, Judge executes a painstaking, repetitive process done entirely by hand, another characteristic generally pertaining to an older artistic generation: “I achieve the symmetrical quality of my work in the drawing stage of my process. I usually create a matrix such as a ‘pie’ shape, divided into sections. On top of this, I design one section shape and then trace and transfer it down around the entire circle matrix so each section appears the same,” Judge explains.



Pop Flower 108, Mary Judge, 2016

“I cut a stencil by hand by laying transparent acetate over the line drawing. The stencil then goes down onto the surface of my drawing paper. The open areas are beaten with a sack of cotton cloth filled with powdered pigment,” the artist adds. “I build up the surface to the color I like and then fix with spray fix. Finally, I go back and add more elements all using different stencils.”

Yet despite the apparent emphasis on quality and process, the artist explains that they are but a portion of her goals with these work: “The meaning and effect of my work does not finish in the formal aspects or in the process only. The center of the works is a ‘magic point,’ a point from which everything appears and disappears, much like in Islamic art forms. That’s where I seek to create transcendence in the image.”



Polypetalous Exhibition View, Mary Judge, 2016

Polypetalous will be on view at [Kenise Barnes Fine Art \(http://www.kbfa.com/\)](http://www.kbfa.com/) until December 23rd. Check out more of Mary Judge's drawings, prints, and paintings [here \(http://www.maryjudge.com/\)](http://www.maryjudge.com/).

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