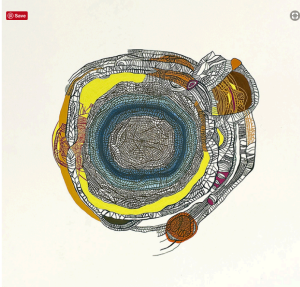




Nature and MTV

May 21, 2015 Emily Drew The Spot



As the spring semester comes to a close, Sage of Albany ended this year's Artist Lecture Series with a presentation by the native Troy fine artist Jenny Kemp.

The Opalka Gallery lecture room was filled with students, ready to hear Kemp speak about her technique, which has earned her spots in dozens of galleries and exhibitions throughout the country. Kemp's lecture concluded Sage's 2014-15 lecture series, which included visits from emerging and award-winning visual artists, sculptors, and interior designers from around state and Capital District.

The 36-year-old Kemp currently lives in Troy, but grew up in rural Wisconsin, where she said she got her inspiration. Living in such a small out-of-the-way town, she said her parents steered her away from television and towards the outdoors.

"I spent time outdoors making my entertainment outdoors," said Kemp, which inspired her to include natural themes in her artwork. However, when the opportunity came up at a friend's house, she would watch television obsessively, she said.

When one student asked Kemp what shows would draw her attention, she said that she mostly remembered pop-art style cartoons and MTV animations.

Some of her work "feels like it's very much like the MTV generation, like the crazy graphics that MTV would have," the student said.

Kemp said she tried to include natural themes, as well as her "obsession" with design into her paintings. "I think my work kind of encompasses both those worlds. Nature and appreciation and fascination for natural realms, but also an obsession with design and aesthetics and how those things can communicate," she told the Sage students.

After her undergraduate studies in the University of Wisconsin, Kemp lived in Seattle before moving to Albany to receive her Master of Fine Arts at the University of Albany, where she graduated from in 2012. There, she said she expanded her work to study the relationship of the human form with nature, largely drawing inspiration from her move across the country and the awkwardness of being in an unfamiliar place.

On top of being featured galleries and show across the United States, from Seattle to Albany County, Kemp has been named as one of "10 Painters Who Are Changing Their Medium in the 21st Century" by Huffington Post. She was also featured in the "100 Painters of Tomorrow" project by London-based curator Kurt Beers. Just last year, her work was shown at the Albany International Airport in the "Second Nature" show.

Currently, Kemp said she is working on a series studying lines and color, specifically colors that draw a viewer's eye, and inventing "different ways of creating space." Kemp showed students her more recent work that showed dozens of lines on top of bright color. When painting, she said she often looks more at the space between a line rather than the line itself.

When asked what she uses for her work, Kemp said that she tries to use a color only once in a painting and does every line by hand after sketching a design on a separate page.

"That's important," she said. "My work is all about doing it by hand," with no paint rollers or guidance. She said that, for larger paintings, she spends anywhere from 20 to 30 hours working on a piece, and 10 to 15 on smaller pieces.

However, Kemp said that, like most artists, she sometimes hits a wall with her work, which recently spurred her to delve into animation with the help of Photoshop. In her last year of graduate school, Kemp said that she began making short animations where she takes one small piece of her painting and explores how it looks three-dimensionally.

While the animations were meant to push her painting further, she said she became interested to do more animations to further study her interest in space and shape. The videos, set to music by local artists, can be found on her website along with images of her paintings and information on current and past gallery exhibitions.

For more information on Kemp's work, go to www.jennykemp.net. For more information on the Opalka Gallery at Sage of Albany, go to www.sage.edu/opalka.