

ART REVIEWS

Stark Paints a Sumptuous, Labor-Intensive 'Rainbow'

By DAVID PAGEL
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Like an alchemist who's unaware that she's a living anachronism, Linda Stark takes the ingredients usually used to make paintings and instead crafts ravishing wall-sculptures. Under her spell, oil on canvas and panel is transformed into dancing flames, frozen drips, interwoven strips, cascading waves and spiraling grooves. Each small, 3-D piece embodies exquisite, gem-like perfection.

Titled "Be the Rainbow," Stark's gorgeous show at Marc Foxx Gallery includes every color of the spectrum and at least one example of her idiosyncratic, exceptionally painstaking techniques. A hot, Pop palette of eye-grabbing, can-

dy-colored artificiality dovetails with the mind-boggling processes Stark patiently endures as she makes her labor-intensive reliefs.

"Candy Corn Weave" consists of viscous rivulets of pigment poured diagonally across a square canvas, to form a neat grid that mimics the weave of the fabric. Each stripe of paint must dry for days before Stark pours another parallel band that follows an elaborate, pre-conceived pattern, running over and under the bands it intersects.

Other works employ similar, slow accretions of paint, sometimes building up to form a verdant volcano ("Be Mine"), an icicle-like melt-down ("Guardian of the Night Rainbow") or a pair of protruding

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nipples ("Rainbow Pierce"). A powerful sense of stoicism is palpable in these pieces, recalling the patience Penelope demonstrated as she kept her suitors at bay, unraveling by night what she had woven by day.

Stark's two most mysterious works appear to have been carved out of thick slabs of paint. Glistening as if they're still wet, the dense contours of these reliefs were actually made by teasing the edges of puddles of paint, just before they dried. Tiny ripples, pinnacles and puckers grew, layer after layer, to form wavy ridges and spiraling valleys.

Shamelessly sumptuous, Stark's art embraces excessiveness. With a piece titled "Purple Love IV (Rotation Diptych)," it's clear that the artist isn't afraid to put her obsessive behavior on public display, where the risk of embarrassment is always present. In the end, Stark's sculpted paintings redeem the labor that goes into their making, resulting in talismans of infectious dedication that's freely available to every viewer.

■ *Marc Foxx Gallery, 3026 Nebraska Ave., Santa Monica, (310) 315-2841, through Nov. 18. Closed Sundays and Mondays.*