

New Editions 2014

Xylor Jane

Third Order Magic Square for Deep Sleep
(2014)

Three-color aquatint, 21 3/4 x 24 1/2 inches. Edition of 22. Printed and published by Wingate Studio, Hinsdale, NH. \$2,000.

Prints, quite simply, are affairs in numbers. Through the use of reproductive techniques, images can be released from the limitations of a solitary existence, multiplied into a series of iterations and divided as these iterations are sorted into sequenced editions. Perhaps a reprinting leads to the existence of additional copies entering circulation, as is occasionally the case with artist's books. Or perhaps copies are subtracted from circulation when they are damaged, censored or destroyed. In short, the print is intertwined with processes that systematically and numerically arrange images that exist more than once.

Xylor Jane, a Massachusetts artist, has long been interested in the aesthetics of mathematical systems, but most of her work to date has taken the form of unique (non-multiple) paintings and drawings. Her first collaboration with Wingate Studio is thus a meaningful departure.

As in Jane's other work, the image is based on a mathematical structure: in this case the magic square. The numerical values that usually populate these grids are replaced here by blocks of color, the three tones of the aquatint overlapping to create a broader palette. The lines dividing these color blocks are not immaculately straight as one might expect from an artist riveted by mathematical elegance. Instead, these precise but nonetheless imperfect margins make the work resemble a patchwork quilt, a likeness that synchs



Xylor Jane, *Third Order Magic Square for Deep Sleep* (2014).

neatly with the title's description of "a magic square for deep sleep."

The resemblance to the tessellated patterns on quilts or tiled surfaces makes the use of print and its implications of multiplicity particularly interesting. One wonders what it might look like if multiple members of the edition were arranged in larger permutations, essentially increasing the mathematical order of Jane's magic square. While the subjects of Jane's paintings and drawings are always neatly contained

within the physical boundaries of the surface, the aquatint encourages the viewer to look beyond the edge. Mathematical relationships and their aesthetic implications are embedded within the individual magic-square image, but *Third Order Magic Square for Deep Sleep* asks to be considered in terms of the larger structure of the edition. Jane's attentiveness to mathematics is expanded by the multiplicity inherent in printmaking itself. ■

—Elliott Mickleburgh