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THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2020

Jennifer Banzaca provides colorful, eccentric vision of 'Utopia' at Voss Gallery




BY [LUNA KHALIL](#) | STAFF

LAST UPDATED MARCH 19, 2020

On Saturday, San Francisco-based artist Jennifer Banzaca opened her painting exhibit titled "Utopia" at Voss Gallery's "[The Down Low]." Originally from the East Coast, Banzaca trained at the Art Students League of New York and served as an artist in residence at the Skopelos Foundation for the Arts in Skopelos, Greece. Her style is distinctly vibrant and bright, showcasing a variety of visual

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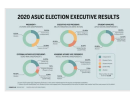
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textures through shape and pattern. In “Utopia,” Banzaca’s latest work shines with lively radiance.

Banzaca draws heavy inspiration from various elements of nature, such as the sea, putting her own refreshing twist on these elements. “Underwater 1,” for example, is a delightful voyage through color and fluidity, two signature features of Banzaca’s work. Her smooth acrylic strokes blend beautifully with each other while the complementary colors create tension. The warm orange focal point evokes a tropical, deep ocean trench, contrasting sharply with the various blue tones that dominate the foreground.

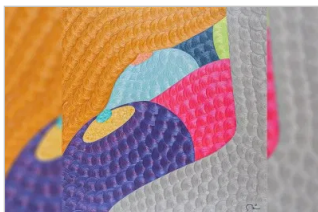
Brilliant flashes of color and whimsical shapes also characterize “Underwater 2,” which serves as a visual dive through an otherworldly coral reef. Golden zigzagged lines contrast with concentric lime green circles to create a reef-like effect. Magenta purple and a sea of cornflower blue comprise the background of the piece, submerging the viewer into an underwater world. Seen in contrast to “Underwater 1,” “Underwater 2” highlights the versatility of Banzaca’s technique and her ability to create exciting textures through her use of line and shape. As a duo, the two paintings serve as inverses of each other while illustrating a unified vision of a utopian sea.

“Wild Bower,” meanwhile, transports the viewer to a shaded tropical garden in paradise. A turquoise and dark blue crisscross pattern outlines the frame of the painting, setting the atmosphere with a bower providing shade to the viewer. The heart of the painting bursts with golden and mango yellows, with lush green foliage gushing past the borders of the diamond-shaped pane. Dapples of rosy pink bleed through the foreground, adding intensity to the wild heat from outside. Banzaca’s technique is innovative and unique in the way it balances fluid swirls with solid lines, creating movement and animated vibrancy.

“Remnant” is decidedly more somber and austere. Cooler, deeper colors distinguish the piece, with only a few patches of pineapple yellow and scarlet to break up the solemnity. The jagged peaks of the purple boulders are simultaneously almighty and fragile; the linear pattern of the mountains conveys a kind of solidity, although this firmness is complicated by the wobbliness of the lines. Banzaca plays an optical illusion on the viewer through her expert use of patterns, selecting linear shapes that appear rigid at first but break down upon close examination due to the purposeful lack of centering. “Remnant” presents a dystopian world, stripped bare of nearly everything. The visual tension of pattern and instability suggests that man-made havens are not truly solid, and thus even utopia can deteriorate.

“The Planet” takes all of these conflicting visions, synthesizing an imaginative manifestation of Earth from a distant perspective. The viewer sees an unnamed planet, presumably Earth, from a vantage point that is far enough away to see the sphere in its entirety yet close enough to pick up distinct details. Vivacious green trees and cacti sprout from the sphere’s top half, creating an image of abundant life, with multicolored patterns and curves descending down below. The resulting conglomeration is almost overwhelming in the pure saturation of shape and color, but Banzaca manages to keep the painting light through her use of a speckled purple background. A pink sun looms very closely above the planet, heating it up so much that drips of color melt out from the planet. Banzaca suggests with this piece that although the world we live in is vivid and teeming with life, its intensity is also its downfall, as seen in the correlation between human industrial activity and climate change.

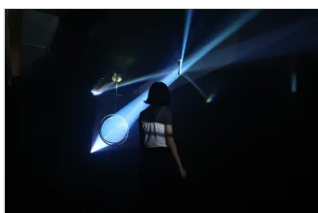
Through “Utopia,” Banzaca conceives a world of her own, envisioning a fantastic utopia of sultry sunsets and lavish forests. At the same time, she reflects on the planet we occupy, questioning humanity’s relationship with nature from a lens that is both appreciative and critical. As a whole,



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“Utopia” communicates that although Earth can be our own paradise, we also owe our utopia respect and reciprocity through a cycle of sustainability and awareness.

Contact Luna Khalil at lkhalil@dailycal.org.

 [Jennifer Banzaca, utopia, voss gallery](#)

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