

Triangles Transform From Shapes To Art

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Art: 'Kate Stiassni: Spatial Relations'

By
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Kate Stiassni's "A Tall Order" is one of the works currently on display at The White Gallery. Photo submitted

Kate Stiassni continues pushing the boundaries of contemporary fabric art in her new show, "Spatial Relations," at The White Gallery in Lakeville. Her usual vibrant colors are there, but so is a new concern for the relationship of her abstract figures to each other and to the empty space around them.

Stiassni still employs traditional quilting techniques, using thousands of stitches to attach her shapes, each cut from fabric hand-dyed in brilliant colors, to a single piece of textile backed with batting. But in some pieces, she "draws" on top of the abstracted geometric shapes with hand-sewn "lines," skinny lines of stitches that add dimension or echo the figures underneath. They give depth to what is, after all, Stiassni's picture plane, and they suggest allied or contrasting tensions, even conflicts between forms.

The show is based on the triangle. Almost every piece results from Stiassni's manipulation of this simple geometric form. Sometimes triangles are untethered, barely touching; other times they are side by side or layered on top of each other. Some are sharply defined as in a plain geometry class. Some have lost their angularity, pushed out of the expected shape but still more triangular than not.

In "Composition with Triangles 1 and 4," a few figures, mostly narrow and elongated, float in space, barely touching. Echoing shapes, also thin and long, are stitched in a faint black line. In



"Composition with Triangles 2," six tall figures, each in emphatic colors, tilt across each other like tumbling buildings. In "Composition with Triangles 3," the figures are placed next to and then on top of each other in a vibrant semi-pinwheel of color on a dark background.

"Inner Dimensions" is a bold piece with two heavy shapes like nuclear plant cooling towers side by side. One is bright orange, the other — placed upside down — is dark blue. "A Tall Order" shows many narrow triangles, each made with a sliver of contrasting color inside, bumping each other in a vigorous dance. Similar figures, stockier here but also with contrasting color interiors, climb upward from left to right as if on stairs, with thinner triangles lying in the right foreground, as if they have fallen there.

"Spatial Relations 1" is intriguing: Six colored triangular forms are angled together with narrow slivers of white backing in between, then faint stitched lines make some figures appear three-dimensional. Plain geometry has become solid.

"Kate Stiassni: Spatial Relations" continues at The White Gallery, 342 Main St. in Lakeville, through July 16. Call 860-435-1029 or go to www.thewhitegalleryart.com.