

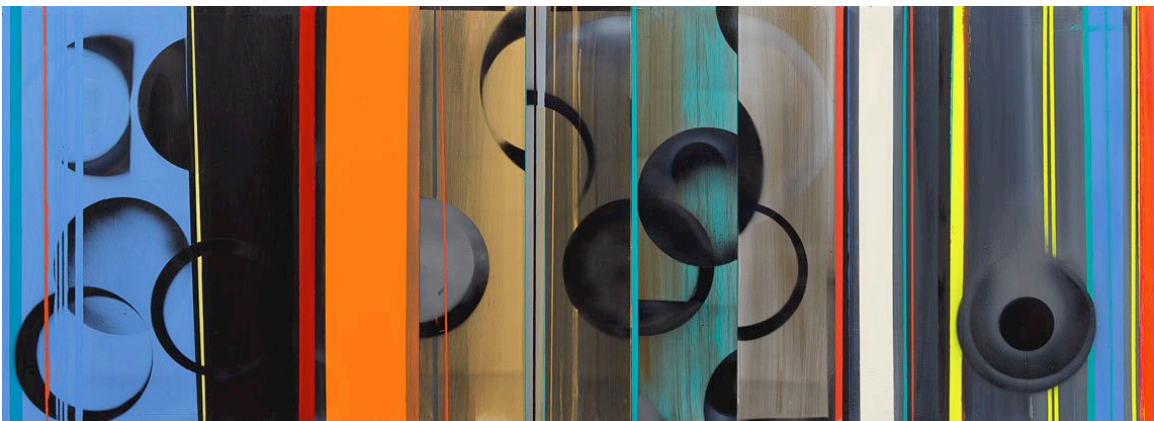
Nola Zirin, Assembling Chaos

At June Kelly Gallery through June 14th

incollect

<https://www.incollect.com/articles/nola-zirin-assembling-chaos>

June 3, 2022



Nola Zirin, *Syncopation*, 2019. Oil and acrylic spray on wood panel, 24 x 66 inches.
Image courtesy of June Kelly Gallery.

by Benjamin Genocchio

Assembling Chaos is the intriguing, beguiling title of Nola Zirin's latest exhibition at the **June Kelly Gallery** in New York. For starters, the notion of chaos taking on a form in any shape or style is inherently contradictory given that the definition of chaos is formlessness, disorder and confusion. So what's going on here?

The show comprises a dozen of Zirin's new geometric abstractions. Zirin is a painter but it is helpful to know that early on she studied printmaking in New York where she was born, raised and lives and works today. Printmaking immediately comes to mind when looking at these paintings, because they are layered and textured as well as tonal in design, all qualities traditionally associated with the process of making prints.



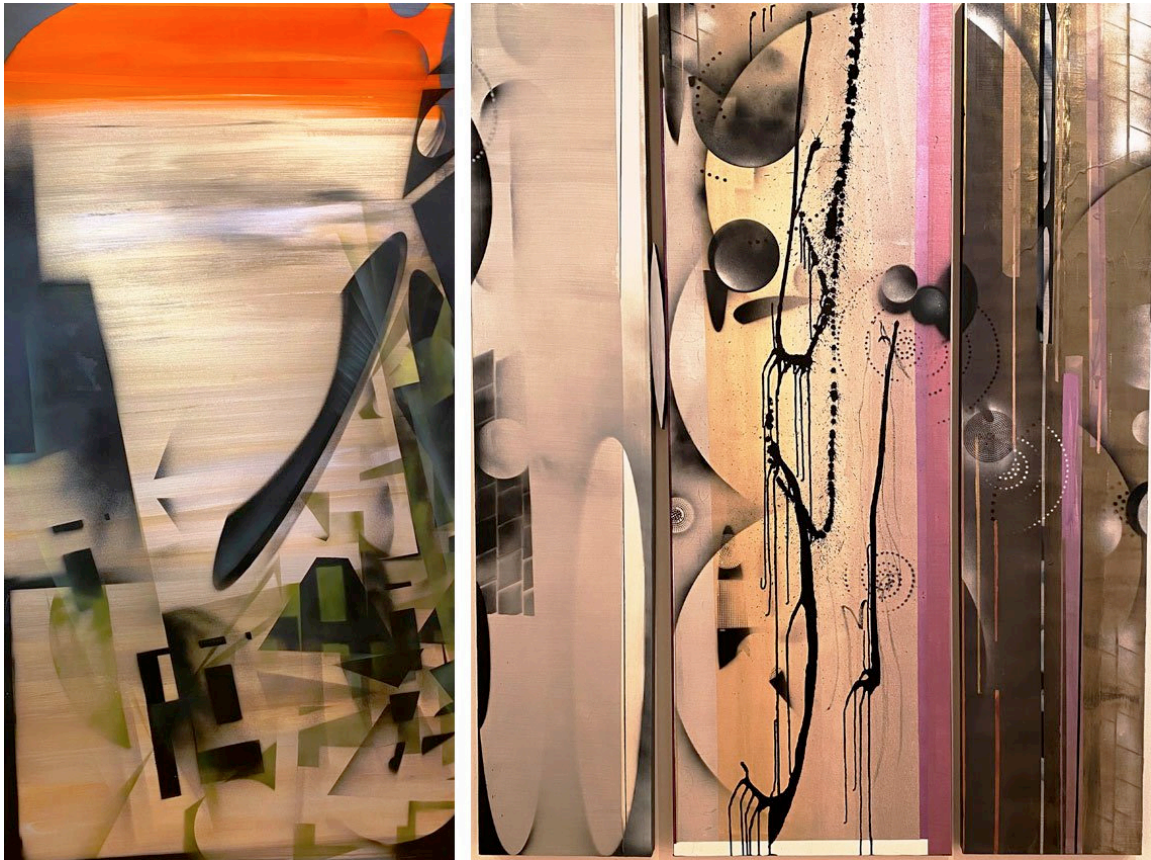
Left: Nola Zirin, *September Song*, 2020. Oil, acrylic on canvas, 76 x 45 inches.

Right: Nola Zirin, *Moon Shadow*, 2019. Acrylic on canvas, 72 x 48 inches.

Images courtesy of June Kelly Gallery.

Sometimes the paint is thickly applied, sometimes thinly, which creates another level of formal interest to the imagery, the artist working directly on a painting surface with no preparatory drawing or plan. A mark prompts another mark, and so on, building up the surface with paint strokes, the artist sometimes using taping to define hard edges on forms. Stenciled shapes are then finally spray-painted over brushwork.

The point, it seems to me, is to constantly catch the viewer off guard, disorient a fixed perspective and therefore allow the mind to toggle with a perceived meaning, This is artwork that lends itself to looking, to thinking and to contemplation, to letting go of any preconceived ideas of what an artwork should be saying or doing and just allowing the mind to absorb and react naturally, eliciting meanings and forming associations organically.



Left: Nola Zirin, *Boomerang*, 2021. Oil, acrylic and acrylic spray on canvas, 80 x 44 inches.
Right: Nola Zirin, *Self Assembly*, 2022. Oil, acrylic and acrylic spray on canvas and wood panels, left panel 72 x 16.25, center panel 72 x 24 inches, right panel.
Images courtesy of June Kelly Gallery.

Music appears to be one reference point for the chaotic eclecticism of the designs. Zirin's loosely assembled arrangements of geometric forms, free-form compositions, if you will, capture the melodious, improvisational qualities of jazz. It is tempting to say that if Stuart Davis, the great American modernist painter (and an aficionado of jazz) were alive today this is likely the kind of imagery that he would be painting.

The title of one of the works, *Syncopation* (2019), among the earliest paintings in the show, points to this musical association. So too, does the imagery. It is filled with layered, colored spray-painted orbs attached to thin vertical lines that flow sideways across the surface and together resemble a musical bar — a small segment of music that contains a number of beats. Rhythm and tempo are the subject matter here, even if the first visual association is one of drops of rain on a window pane.