

VISUAL ARTS & ARCHITECTURE

Mysticism in circles

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Don Cooper elaborates on a mix of mystical practices in "Bindu: Point of Departure, Point of Return," his latest show at Sandler Hudson Gallery.

Taking on spiritual terrains, the Atlanta artist constructs lush paintings of concentric circles that emanate from a single interior dot known as "Bindu." A concept that is referenced in yoga, prayer and meditation, "Bindu" is a term in Sanskrit, meaning point or spot, marking both origin and destination.



Courtesy of Sandler Houston Gallery

Don Cooper's 'Eternal Cycles' is an intensely colored, pulsating set of concentric circles. A dot anchors each painting in his show at the Sandler Hudson Gallery.



Susan Loftin's earthenware containers cut an almost human form.

REVIEW

Don Cooper: "Bindu: Point of Departure, Point of Return"

Susan Loftin: "Earthenware Containers"
Through Dec. 6. 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Tuesdays–
Fridays; Saturday noon–5 p.m. and by
appointment. Prices: \$800 –\$12,000.
Sandler Hudson Gallery, 1009-A Marietta
St. N.W., Atlanta. 404-817-3300;
www.sandlerhudson.com.

Bottom line: Cooper offers a satisfying progression in an increasingly conceptual journey. Loftin's latest are intimate and irresistibly human.

In a career that has led from figuration to abstraction, Cooper incorporates influences drawn from his travels through southeast Asia, China and as source for this show, India. In these works (notably different from his surreal, biomorphic landscapes of a few years ago), Cooper creates his circles with precision, progressing (surprisingly) from the outer edge of the composition toward the center.

He modulates potentially jarring effects of closely set line through a sort of chromatic blending and interruption — combining, alternating and managing tones that range from dusty and confectionary to primary. He thus achieves an effect that invigorates, uplifts and calms — a painterly convergence — with circles as energy, as celestial bodies and as a path to self-awareness.

In "Opening Gold Bindu," an inner disk of yellow burns like a sun, radiating waves of unexpected pinks and greens. "Eternal Cycles" raises the temperature with an electric palette and pulsating, closely set rings. "Consciousness" crystallizes spiritual clarity in delectable reds and rose, while "Seed of Consciousness" bleeds eerie tones together so subtly we are unsure where one shade leaves off and the next begins, apt metaphor for the gradual acquisition of knowledge.

At the heart of each painting, Cooper places the requisite dot, clearly anchoring the visual expression of journey and return, respecting the premise of "Bindu."

Susan Loftin's "Earthenware Containers" present a dramatically different aesthetic, one that is tactile and earthbound.

The artist's playfully tipsy vessels are small, stout and horizontally oriented. Glazed in luminous lapis and sage tones, their crackled, irregular surfaces render them irresistibly touchable. Set on short feet in semi-"T" shapes, these intimate containers cut almost human figures. Lovely on their own, they seem the ideal counterpoint to Cooper's otherworldly compositions.