

# CANADIANART

REVIEWS

## Jennifer Rose Sciarrino: A Modernist Romance

Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto June 21 to July 19, 2014

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Jennifer Rose Sciarrino, "Patterned Recognition" installation view at Daniel Faria Gallery.

Jennifer Rose Sciarrino is often placed in the lineage of Minimalism. Recently, the Toronto-based emerging artist was part of a group exhibition at Regina's Dunlop Gallery that explored the legacy of 1960s formalist and minimalist preoccupations; with the title "Who's Afraid of Purple, Orange, and Green?" that riffs off of a Barnett Newman painting, the show presented modernist recoveries and revisions by contemporary Canadian artists.

Sciarrino's latest solo show at Toronto's Daniel Faria Gallery, titled "Patterned Recognition," showed that her work continues to rub up against Minimalism. This new body of work was displayed serially, on rows of white tables that filled the main gallery space.

In this series of sculptures, a rectangular strip of nylon stretches across each table-cum-plinth, covering a three-dimensional plaster model underneath. The nylons are printed with textures that simulate industrial materials: a dusty rose imitates copper, a striated grey mimics brushed stainless steel. The artifice is revealed in rare cases, when ripples in the nylon expose its material identity. But these two-part sculptures are most compelling when the fabric hugs the plaster, forming a smooth, seductive surface. Each nylon-skinned protrusion then appears as a seamless unit that wavers between the three-dimensional form and the printed surface. This ambiguity recalls what Donald Judd deemed "specific objects"—liminal entities that have qualities of both painting and sculpture, and yet fully being neither.

But unlike Judd's serial boxes or Robert Morris' angular beams, Sciarrino's plaster models depart from basic geometric forms. Cut using computer numerical control (CNC) technology, her models are biomorphic, endowed with irregular bends and undulating planes. They evoke the formal aesthetic of the digital turn in '90s architecture, epitomized by the folding shapes of Frank Gehry and the rounded "blobs" of Greg Lynn. In a February *Artforum* article, Mario Carpo observed a polarization in digital design between this elegant modernist style and a more recent postmodernist tendency. The former hinges on techniques of simplification, resulting in integrated, curving forms; the latter, by contrast, takes a "big data" approach to computation, resulting in an aesthetic that is fragmentary, convoluted, and even chaotic.

Certainly of the modernist strain, Sciarrino's models betray a romantic idealism. The present condition of incessant data accumulation and fragmentary attention spans is, perhaps, indexed in sculpture by the trend of assemblage. But Sciarrino's nylon-swathed forms—defiantly seamless even in their dual make-up—yearn for a return to the unified sculptural body.

The philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer claimed that the encounter between a contemporary reader and a canonical text enables a fusion between the horizon of

the reader and that of the text, leaving each transformed and expanded. In art, the past offers itself not only to superficial repackaging, but also to the expansion of our epistemic horizon such that we can make richer meaning of our historical moment. Despite its seductive surfaces, Sciarrino's new body of work exceeds superficial recycling. In their dialogue with past styles, her sculptures charm with their idealism, and impress with their expansiveness.

- Luo, Amy. "Jennifer Rose Sciarrino: A Modernist Romance", *Canadian Art*, July 19, 2014