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Kind of Blue Artist's Statement

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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Our view of the world and ourselves can never be accurate because we unconsciously translate what we know into something we can understand. We make connections and assumptions within an imposed structure and develop theories based on imperfect information. Although possibility continually feeds our intuitive minds, it is a driving need for clarity that arouses our intellect and keeps us searching for understanding. We engineer seamless models that seduce us into accepting their flaws and then leave us in a perpetual compromise with truth. My paintings reflect the world I know: a world of random data and the constructs we create to understand an increasing volume of information. I use mathematics and geometric shapes to abstract and reanimate statistical data; I use form and composition to explore the space between what we know and what we don't know and to examine the effectiveness of tightly held ideas.

It's easy to understand why seasons change because we have a simple model—the earth's orbit around the sun—but prior to the Copernican revolution, we operated with an entirely different understanding of the cosmos. Derrida and the poststructuralists tell us that Western thought is laden with binary opposition, which forces us to organize information into hierarchical and superficial structures with no room to see that the glass is both half-empty and half-full. World maps are typically oriented so that North America appears in the upper-left (a place of high importance to a Western reader) not because the earth is thus oriented in the universe, but because of political egocentrism and preconceived ideas. And yet, somehow we are aware of our limitations and the recognition drives us to seek increasing degrees of precision and clarity. We change our point of view. In the same way that simply rotating a map can change our perception without diminishing its authenticity, I create paintings that can be oriented in any direction.

Order and structure are exemplified in my compositions through grids, squares, and sharp lines. Like my reductivist predecessors, I use simplicity of form to interpret complicated content. Enough information is given in each painting to tempt viewers to solve the puzzle, fill in the gaps, and work out a structure. Based on real data, statistics are presented in unconventional, often

arbitrary ways to best consider and question their viability. Models are assembled with multilayered systems, employing numerological word calculation, rudimentary counting routines, and color coding to mimic the imperfect qualities of equations with nonfunctioning variables.

I use color to create movement, control space, and reveal relational dynamics; each color has its own abilities and psychological articulation. Color communicates rhythm, temperature, and an almost mystical capacity for individual expression. I mix a full spectrum (including black) from only three hues to suggest the limitations. Because this trio generates an infinite number of colors, profound possibility is contained in their combination and coded into each painting.

The relatively small size of my paintings speaks to our imperfect frame of reference. I believe our inability to develop clear and accurate models is, at least in part, based on the many limitations we face as imaginative beings living in physically restrictive bodies. Size serves another purpose: like a whisper, diminutive pieces pique intellectual curiosity and pull viewers into a conversation that is contemplative and engaging; they are a knowing twinkle in the eye. The panels are made of wood to remind us that the constructs we create rest on organic, natural phenomenon.

In life and art, it is the tension between clarity and possibility, between what we know and what we don't know, that engages and enchants us. We replace our theories with better models and more accurate hypotheses because we are driven as much by the search for truth as truth itself. Once we accept that we do not know, that we can only start where we are and work with what we have, life becomes filled with surprise and expectation. My aim is a simple one: to explore the viewpoints we take for granted and communicate the sense of intellectual wonder we experience when we realize they may be wrong.

Leslie Love Stone

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