

PRESSBOOK

Jesse MOCKRIN

KCRW

April 2016

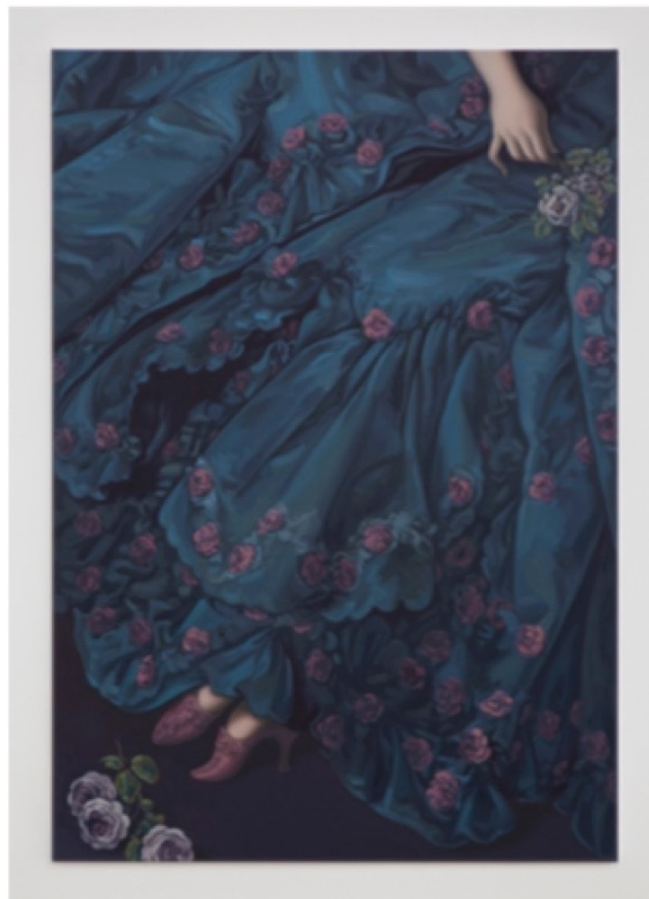


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Art Talk: Jesse Mockrin at Night Gallery

Hunter Drohojowska-Philp swoons over the artist's ode to the Rococo
By Hunter Drohojowska-Philp | April 14, 2016

Of all the sources of contemporary art that easily come to mind, the least likely may be Jean-Honoré Fragonard, painter of Rococo scenes of pleasure and play among sumptuously dressed men and women in the years before the French Revolution. Yet, that is exactly what Jesse Mockrin explores in her show *The Progress of Love* at Night Gallery closing this weekend, April 16.



Jesse Mockrin, "Bloom," 2015
Courtesy of Night Gallery

Fragonard's renowned 1767 painting, *The Swing*, portrays a pretty young woman being pushed on a swing suspended from the branch of a tree. Fragonard captured the moment when a young man who may be her lover is getting a tantalizing glimpse beneath her layers of petticoat.



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Jesse Mockrin, "Garden of Love," 2016
Courtesy of Night Gallery

In *Garden of Love* (2016) Mockrin disassembles the narrative by painting large segments of the original, which is so well known that informed viewers will recognize just the shapely leg kicking off a pink satin shoe and the extended hand of the young man. In this enlarged detail of the original painting, which hangs in London's Wallace Collection, Mockrin brings a greater simplicity and scale to the rendering of the tree limbs, the rosy fabric of the dress, the deep green leaves. Working in oil, she maintains a matte finish that lends a more graphic and contemporary sensibility that transcends the act of simple reproduction.



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Jesse Mockrin, "Moonage Daydream," 2016
Courtesy of Night Gallery

In ancien regime France, Fragonard and his teacher François Boucher, served the wealthiest patrons of their time and layered their scenes with rich sensuality and sexual allusion. The Swing, for instance, was a commissioned portrayal of the original owner's mistress.



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Jesse Mockrin, "Love and Friendship," 2016
Courtesy of Night Gallery

Mockrin's paintings toy with the predilections of that earlier time. With amused reserve, Mockrin paints only the suggestive gesture. The hem of a dark satin dress raised to reveal a creamy thigh, hands clasped innocently together in the lap. There is no other evidence of the woman wearing that dress apart from the small black and white spaniel curled up at her side, perhaps inspiration for the title *Love and Friendship* (2016). The strongest pictures, for the most part, operate in a shadowy shallow pictorial space of rich dark fabrics, with tousled greenery and pink flowers, exposing the pale flesh of a female hand or an ankle. The stories are unclear, gender is implied but not always certain. Do those long thin figures belong to a woman or a man?



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Jesse Mockrin, "School of Love," 2016
Courtesy of Night Gallery

Mockrin, an LA-based artist who got her MFA at UC Santa Barbara in 2011, showed works of similar sensibility at Night Gallery two years ago. Those were mostly androgynous portraits on black backgrounds that alluded to 18th century and earlier styles of painting. This rewarding show offers the promise of a deeper commitment to understanding the enduring allure of art that is not just modern or contemporary.