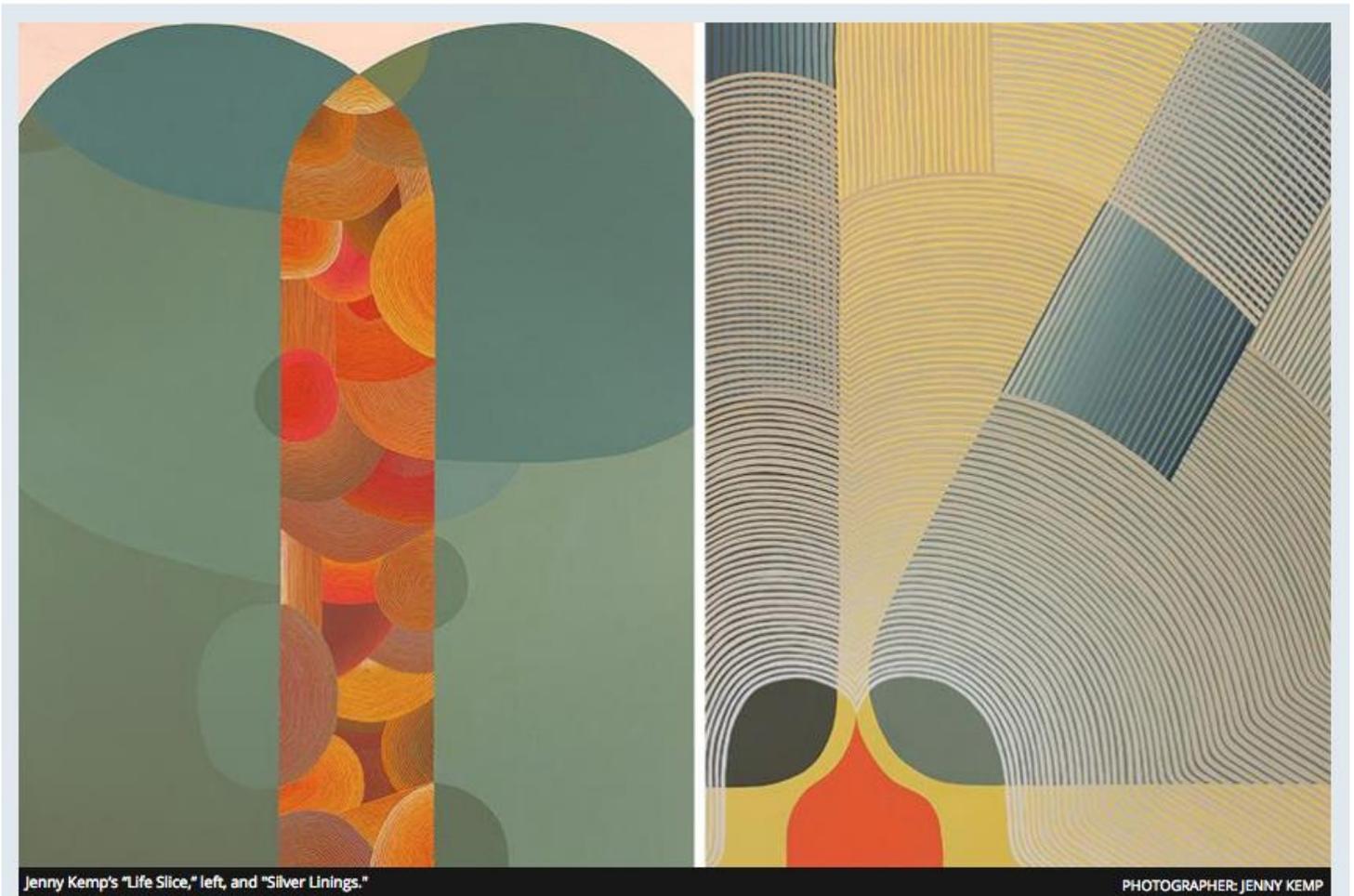


ARTS

On Exhibit: Curves, lines create sense of movement

"Jenny Kemp: Slow Grow" exhibition is on view at the Nott Memorial at Union College

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Jenny Kemp's "Life Slice," left, and "Silver Linings."

PHOTOGRAPHER: JENNY KEMP

Context is key in the "Jenny Kemp: Slow Grow" exhibition on view at the Nott Memorial on the Union College campus.

The precise lines, subtle yet strong color gradients, and sloping curves make for the perfect material for the Memorial, with its 16 sides creating repetitive circular shapes. While Kemp was in part inspired by the Nott Memorial, even the works that weren't inspired by the building play perfectly against the backdrop of the round

exhibition space.

Entering into the Memorial, one can't help but notice the stained glass, the yellows and reds. Even that seems to inform our experience with Kemp's exhibition, as she uses a range of saturated yellows, blues, greys, and a vibrant red.

In "Silver Linings," sharply curved blue and grey shapes meet a soft yellow hue, all with silver stripes overlaid. It's joyful as if to say "it's all silver linings." In "Life Slice," two looming blue/grey/green curves create a Venn diagram revealing lava lamp-like striped circular shapes, in vibrant reds and oranges.

Kemp has been a well-known artist in the Capital Region for years. Her work has been featured nationally and she was recently featured in "100 Painters of Tomorrow," as well as in The Huffington Post and The New York Times. Kemp has served on the board of Collar Works for the past five years. But for curator Julie Lohnes, 2018 was the perfect time to exhibit her work at Union.

"It was kismet," Lohnes said. Shortly after Kemp and Lohnes first discussed "Slow Grow," Kemp stepped in to fill a teaching position at Union for a professor who is on sabbatical.

Her students have an opportunity to see her work on exhibit, which is rare. It's already had an impact on students, as over a dozen attended the opening last month, said Lohnes.

There's plenty to work with, examine and enjoy about Kemp's work. The curves and biologically-inspired imagery give the pieces an element of undeniable sensuality. However, it's not lurid or overdone. It's subtle in some places and the focus of others.

"There's something [in her work that] I'm very drawn to," Lohnes said.

Working in a stripe motif, Kemp creates these precise, and carefully organized shapes that give off a sense of constant movement. Beyond Kemp's paintings, the exhibition also includes one of her stop-motion animations, which really draws on the movement seen in her other works.

"She's able to play more in the animation," Lohnes said. While Kemp has to be calculated with the curving stripe motifs in her paintings, the process is a bit more free for animations like "Ensemble," the stop-motion featured in "Slow Grow." The video clip uses the same shapes and ideas presented in her paintings but adds the movement that the eye naturally sees when viewing her paintings.

While Kemp's work is impressively precise, with sloping and curving lines meeting and running into each other, when getting up close to the works, it's clear from the slight imperfections that it was done free hand. The dichotomy of precision versus imprecision raises questions on the type of art that Kemp creates. Standing back, one could imagine the paintings were completed by a computer or machine. It's not until viewed closely that one can see the human element, the human hand behind the work. It feels like an appropriate place to be in an age of 3-D printing and computer-generated art.

"Slow Grow," will be on exhibit until Dec. 12 in the Mandeville Gallery on the second floor of the Nott Memorial. The exhibit is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. For more information visit union.edu.