



Kyle Fitzpatrick, "Past, Present, Future Time: Samara Golden & Jesse Mockrin At Night Gallery," *Los Angeles I'm Yours*, February 10, 2014.

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Past, Present, Future Time: Samara Golden & Jesse Mockrin At Night Gallery

By Kyle Fitzpatrick | March 15, 2014



If you took the span of a hundred years between 1984 and 2084 and folded the duration in half—so the two '84s could touch—you would have a weird abutting of past and future eighties indulgences. Tacky design collides with polished silvers and floor to ceiling glass walls. Home oddities we now see in thrift stores share shelf space with *découpage* stone objects. The period would be a bit like *Miami Vice* meets *The Jetsons*.

The folding of time is the best way to describe the current show at Night Gallery. Both the work of Samara Golden and Jesse Mockrin are on view and they process time and place in their own contemporary ways that accuse history and popular culture as providers of too much baggage on images. The work is



embedded in nostalgia without being nostalgic. It provides a feeling of déjà vu although there is seriously no chance you have seen anything like this before.

Golden grabs your attention from the millisecond you open Night Gallery's door with a taste of her massive installation. All of the space's windows have been blacked out and the light you let in acts similar to a spotlight shining onto silver walls that a bright red convertible BMW 3 Series has crashed into. An ominous pale purple projection paces across an elevated, inaccessible lookout point coming from a distant lighthouse: you feel like you are outside of an aluminum foil beach house.

You then pass through the second time mark by way of a gallery hall of Mockrin's *Midnight Sun* paintings. The works are oil paintings of delicate pale skinned Renaissance figures whose likeness suggests that of the historic art era, perhaps 1484. Paired with negative space and clever modern croppings, you only get pieces of these persons. One painting features half a face or just a hand while some feature most of a bust. Like a ripped canvas, the image you get is a part of something bigger, perhaps a royal portrait Mockrin has cut and pasted into these isolated and quiet vignettes. There are suggestions that the figures represented recall genderless Peter Pans and modern pop stars, an interesting parallel to otherwise stoic paintings. The takeaway from these is that their subjects are without place or value: they are figures suspended in a limbo of time.

Similarly, Golden's *Mass Murder* is without a clear definition of when. You are enveloped in one of her scenes, a pink and orange sunsetting beach front property where all the furniture is made from aluminum that tabby pastel blankets are draped over. The carpet is a familiar pale blue that may have been in a nursery and there is somewhat suffocating noise—not music, not chatter, not anything to be deciphered. You wander the space wondering why or what is going on but the better question is *when*: is this where she spent vacation days as a child? Is this a reenactment of Leslie Nielsen's oceanside property from *Creepshow*? Is this a forgotten scene from the show *Night Gallery*? There is a sense of dread but also a mashing of then and now and yet-to-come. It's space age thrifting gone wild which her hell kitchen of tacky post-modern fabricked stuffed animals sing to you under the buzz of three competing noisy radios. The narrative is for you to place yourself in at whatever time you want. Golden made the set for your now/then/when soap opera to occur and it is up to *you* to deliver the dialogue.

Both Golden and Mockrin have found something very special at the Night Gallery show that is intentionally specific and vague and will implant itself in your mind for days. It's a showing that asks you more questions that you ask it. It's suffocating in its scale and will have you wondering the hows and whys for an indefinite period of time. It's also the best that Night Gallery has looked because it is so top-to-bottom thought out and created to be experienced. Although you cannot tell why, the show feels important—especially for Golden. It's comparatively subdued and quiet, all the moving parts she has given you drawn back from their potentially over-the-top point of origin. It all works: the timing of it is just right.