

Houstonia.

A Touch of Color Field: Outdoor Art Exhibition at the University of Houston

Public Art UHS offers free programming, self-guided, interactive tours through May

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Sarah Braman (b. 1970) "Here" 2019

Image: University of Houston

Winding through a one-mile stretch of the University of Houston's park-like campus is a series of colorful, bright, large-scale sculptures, offering visitors an emotional lift and escape to fun. Lace up your most comfortable shoes and feel the joy of color in "*Color Field*," open to the public through May 31. Presented by Public Art of the University of Houston System (Public Art UHS), "*Color Field*" is an outdoor temporary exhibition featuring 13 works of art by seven contemporary artists.

Featured artist Sarah Braman created "*Here*" (2019), a concrete culvert fitted with coated aluminum frames and laminated glass. She hopes the show serves as a "short reprieve" from everyday challenges. "I want '*Here*' to be an invitation to slow down and enjoy the experience of looking," said Braman, who is known to repurpose discarded

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objects and give them new life. “Do you notice what you can see through the sculpture? What do you notice that’s reflected back at you from the landscape or the people through the windows?”

It’s those thought-provoking questions that can create a connection between visitors and the works, said Maria C. Gaztambide, Public Art UHS director and chief curator.

“‘Color Field’ inspires us to think of our campus as an enormous sculpture park with plenty of spaces for encountering the works in the exhibition alongside Public Art UHS’s storied permanent collection,” Gaztambide said. “At the same time, the exhibition provides families, art enthusiasts and the broad community with a safe and completely open-air environment to connect with each other and with the emotional value that color brings to our lives.”

The inspiration behind “Color Field” is a mid-twentieth-century painting style of the same name – Color Field – characterized by large areas of single colors and surfaces devoid of realistic representation.

“Taking this style of painting as a point of departure, “Color Field” considers a group of contemporary artists concerned with exploiting color for all of its expressive and evocative possibilities,” added Gaztambide.

‘Stop, Reflect, Engage’

Public art brings people from all spectrums of society who wouldn’t normally go to a gallery or a museum, said Jeffie Brewer, the Nacogdoches, Texas artist who is showing multiple painted steel pieces in “Color Field” – including “Bunny” (2019).

“‘Bunny’ is a form that I made about 12 years ago, and this is what actually got me into making public art,” Brewer explained. “I saw the interaction people had with public art and how they would stop, reflect or engage. That changed my perception of how art in general should be and what it meant to me.”

In addition to “Bunny,” Brewer is displaying other abstract forms “Cloud” (2019), “Gigaff” (2019), Pop (2017), “Kitty” (2019) and “Pink Sexy” (2020).

Along with Brewer and Braman, artists and their works also featured in *Color Field* include: Sam Falls, who has two works in the show: “Untitled (Wind Chimes)” (2014), a larger-than-life-sized, functional wind chime that makes music just by a gentle touch; *Untitled (Maze)* (2014), which consists of brightly colored panels, some of which are coated with light and heat-sensitive paint. Precise incisions into the surface of some panels allows sunlight to shine through the sculpture. *Back to Kansas* (2015) by Spencer Finch is a billboard-sized grid made out of 70 blocks of brilliant and subtle color inspired by “The Wizard of Oz.” Each color in the grid corresponds to a color from the film, such as “Yellow Brick Road” and “Ruby Slippers.” Odili Donald Odita’s “Negative Space” (2019) is a series of 13 flags on flagpoles inspired by the American flag and its related socio-cultural dynamics. Colors such as red, white and blue, and their complementary green, black and orange work to both enhance and contrast each other. “Forms from Life” (2019) by TYPOE is a grouping of minimalist shapes made out of

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painted aluminum that resemble enlarged building blocks. It is a reference to how the basic information we learn as children forms our understanding of the world. Sound artist and composer Amos Cochran's "Color Field Outside / In" (2019) allows one's emotions to wander freely in an immersive sonic soundscape. Cochran uses traditional instruments such as violin, cello, harp and piano to produce abstract recorded sounds.



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