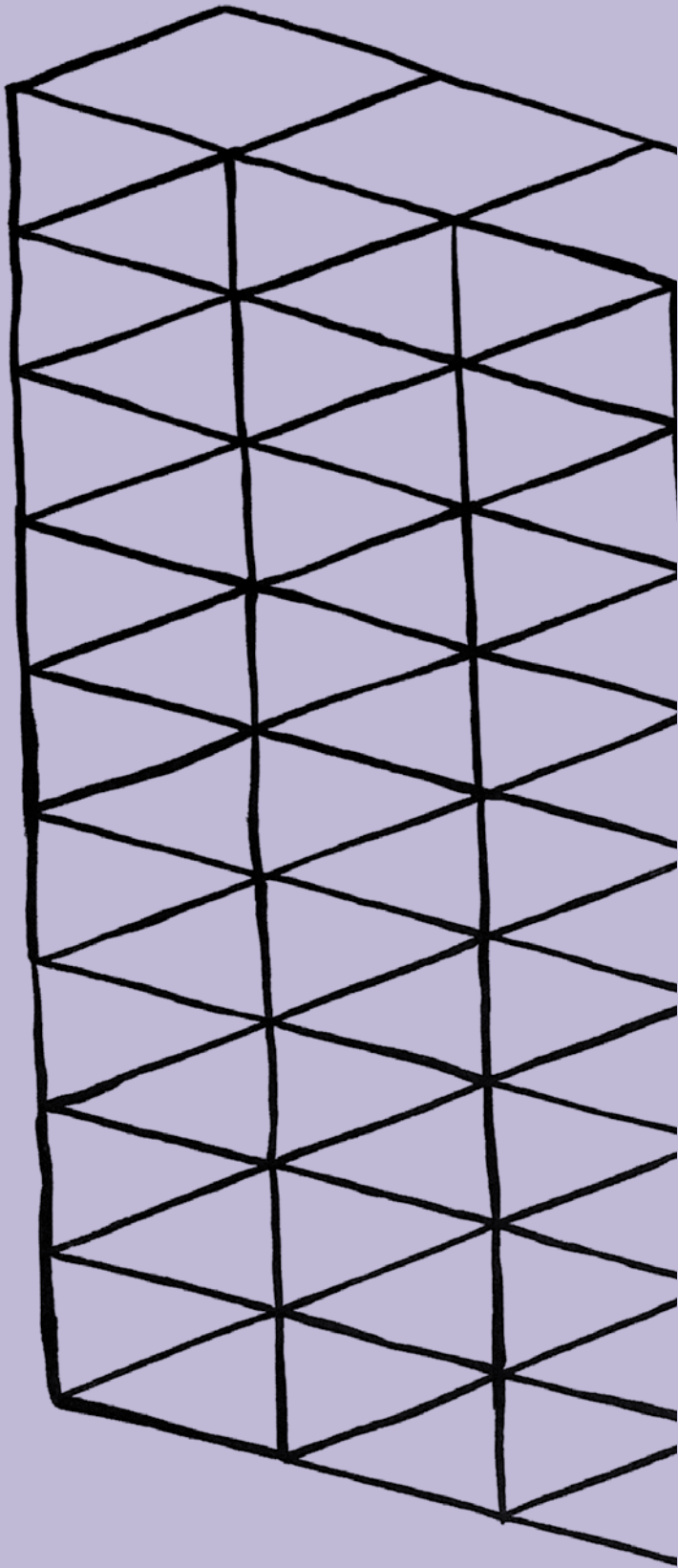


ON

STYLES



Naomi Schlinke
James Turner

Steps on Steppes

January 11–February 15, 2020

James Turner and Naomi Schlinke paint collages and collage paintings. Making becomes a product of movement, simultaneously improvisational and planned, repetitive and unique.

Schlinke's recent pieces are self-contained meditations, calm but evocative like a wild ritual or a sacred freedom. Visual and kinesthetic, her practice draws upon her early years as a dancer in 1970s San Francisco. She covered the front gallery with crinkled paper and mounted seven new pieces on panels clean as tablets. Still abstractions twist and breathe as if stone clouds.

Turner is grounded, humble. He calls his works “drah-rins”. They feel like long walks with old friends. In the back gallery he installed a mutli-layered set of works that work as a whole. Sculpture, painting, drawing, framing, and mural blend and counter each other, balanced but *off*. Concepts of image and object dance like leaves over paths.

viewing hours: Saturdays 3–6:30 pm
schedule a visit, email: hello@northern-southern.com

price list available

Organized by Phillip Niemeyer. Thanks to Brit Schlinke, Maria Nguyen, and Rachel Freeman.

James Turner
untitled drah-rin
2019

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Northern–Southern
1902 East 12th Street, Austin, TX 78702
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James Turner

Why do you make art?

It is my meditation. My studio is where time slows down and I can get lost in play with process, pattern, and color. Where I can juxtapose objects, contradict my own expectations, and have an internal conversation about the outside world without having to say a word. A place where the sublime and the ordinary exist in the same thing.

Why do you refer to your work as “drah-rins”?

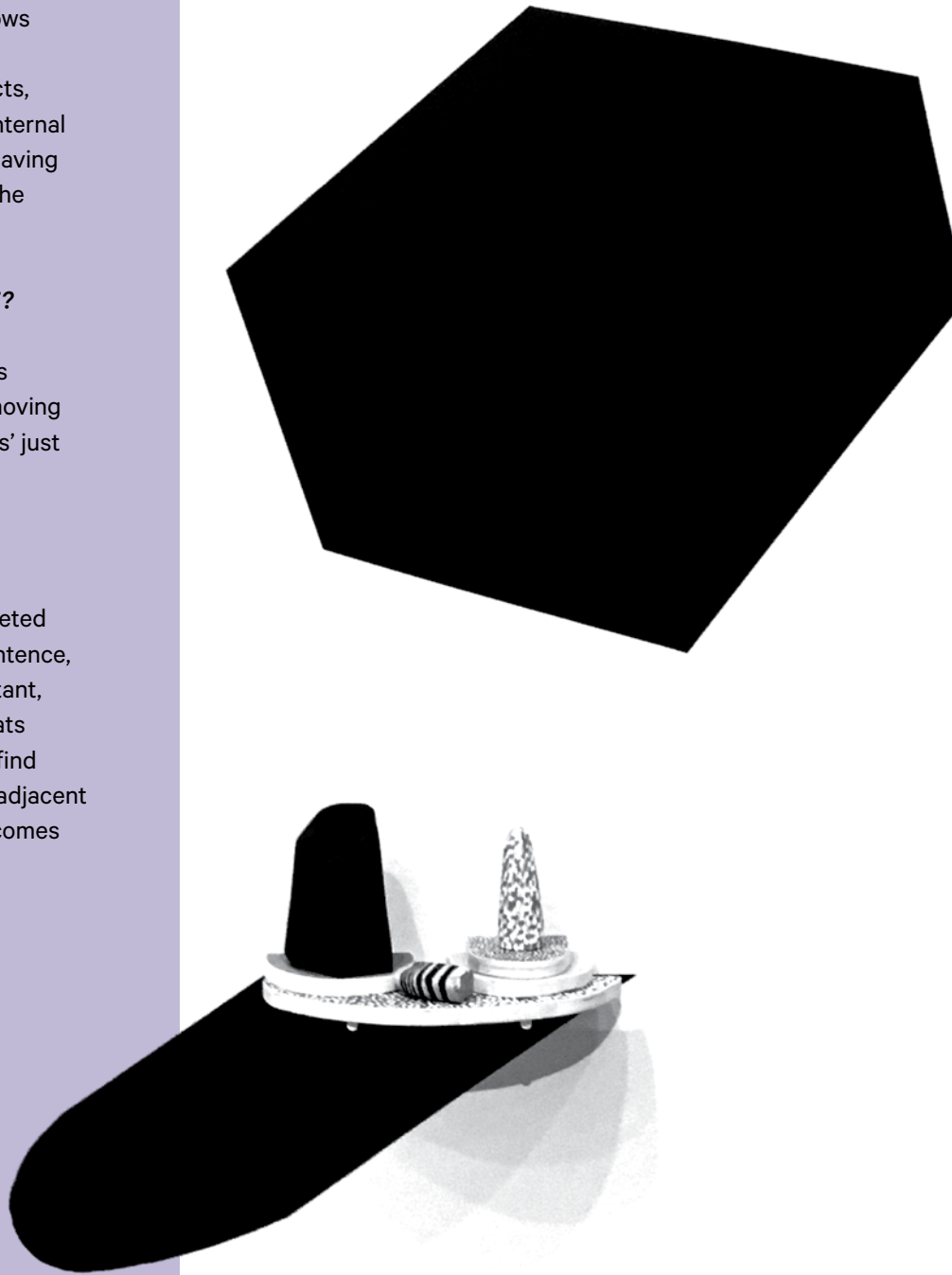
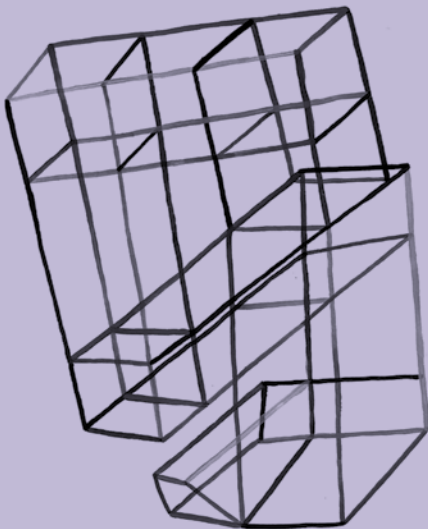
It's a funny word to me. It stumbles - but makes complete sense. More and more, I have been moving away from titling individual works and “drah-rins” just feels like the appropriate catch-all.

What makes a piece finished?

The narrative I am creating is not always completed in an individual work. Each element is like a sentence, paragraph, or chapter in the story. Each important, but dependent on all the other parts to see what's really happening. A place where awkward can find purpose, cadence can teeter, simplicity can sit adjacent to the complicated, and where the process becomes secondary.

How do you know when you are done?

That's a great question.



James Turner

untitled drah-rins and objects

2019

spray paint, acrylic, india ink, cotton rag, foamcore, birch, other mixed media



Naomi Schlinke

The Endless

2019

ink on mulberry paper collaged to painted panel

50 × 38 × 1 inches



Naomi Schlinke

Why do you make art?

I think art-making is a natural part of the human hard drive. Some people have more of this tendency than others. For me, art is an additional room or floor in your house that you didn't know existed. When you go into that room, it leads to other rooms. Initially, you thought you lived in a tiny little house, but as you make your way through the process of creating the work, you realize that there are so many more amazing levels, windows and unknown spaces. It's an incomparable thrill like meeting a being from another planet. Appetite and obsession allow us to create art for no practical reason at all---except perhaps to add to the fecundity of our shared space.

How did you make the pieces in Steps on Steppes?

The source material for these collages is my own ink-on-mulberry-paper paintings. Using gestures, marks, stains, and inkblots, the source paintings themselves are essentially abstract, with an organic and kinesthetic quality. They often have a feeling of boundlessness. No hard edges, no objects, no here and there, just a fast swimming field of marks, particles, and stains. The ink bleeds through the unsized paper, giving every fragment a two-sided possibility. This duality introduces instances of relatedness, difference, and serendipity that one could not create deliberately. The scale and vocabulary of the original painting has a profound influence on the final collage. I only use work that seems ready to pass on to another life.

Before I take apart any painting, I look at it for a long time. First comes the very big cuts and tears. Much of this is done without looking because I don't want to be tempted to pander to the high points of the painting. I collect these fragments and study them without regard for their ultimate use. I spend time responding intuitively to each fragment, adjusting curves that want to be shortened, angles that want to be blunted, etc. Before I ever apply a fragment to the collage process, I want it to have its' own aesthetic integrity. After this process, they are ready to interact with each other without any visual digressions.

Usually, I then place all the fragments in a single heap on a foamcore board. I massage them into place and begin an editing and pinning process. If a stable configuration can withstand several weeks without unearthing lurking doubts or an itch for change, I lightly glue the fragments to each other. Then I slide the collage off the foamcore onto a prepared masonite board, position it anew, and glue it down. The paper surface is sealed with an appropriate spray varnish.

What or who are the finished pieces?

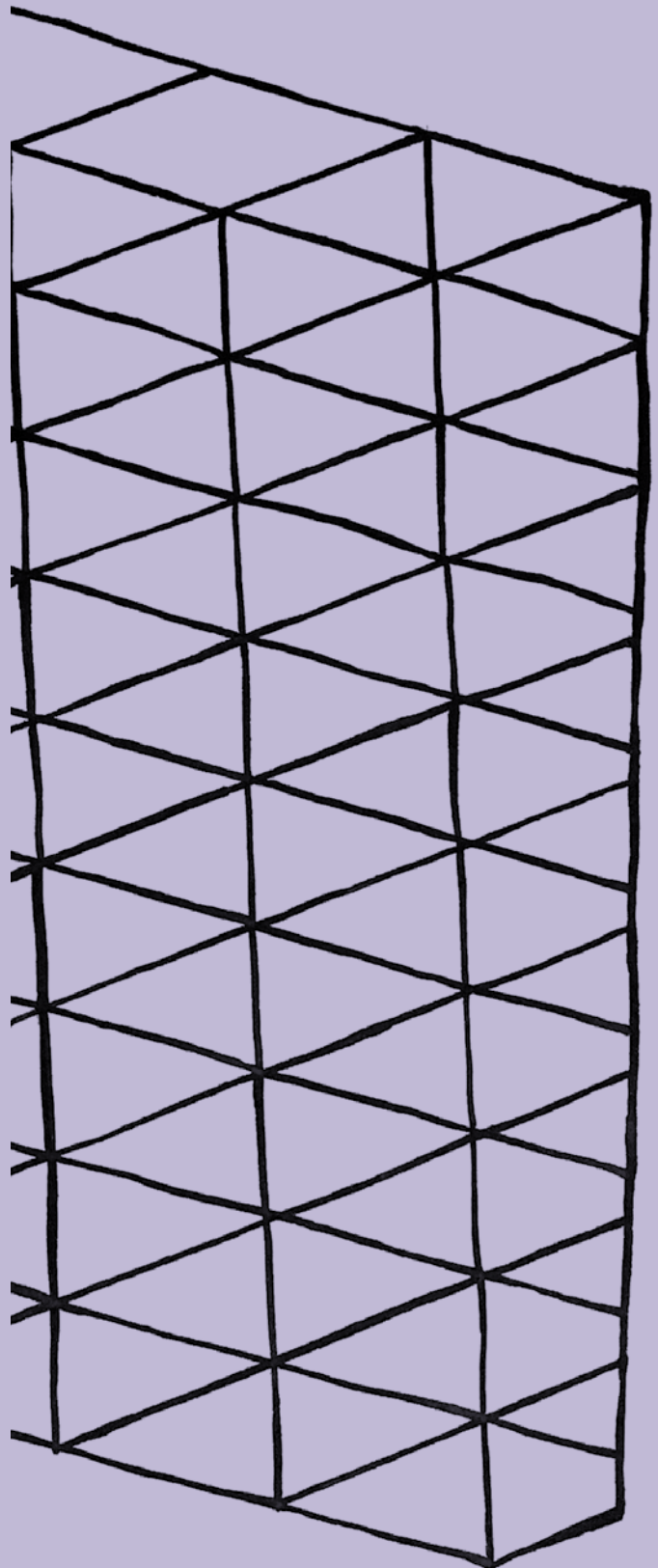
For me, they evoke a pantheon of strange gods, both singular and iconic, dancing in the empty infinity of the white ground. Impersonating living beings, the collage forms move and gesture, generating uncanny resemblances that suggest life and presence. The mystery of this embodiment is an aspect of abstraction that intrigues me.

Part of the beauty of collage is that two things become one: the visual content of the source material and the sculptural form that I create to capture it. Although the fragments are often harvested from a single painting, once they fuse as collage, they create a completely transformed entity. When mounted to a support, its new envelop of space, it may appear to resume its former life simply as a painting.

Before you painted, you were a professional dancer, and you describe your work as kinesthetic. What led you to dance?

Again, I'd have to say hard drive. Dancing, painting, singing, and writing were all an intoxicating part of my childhood and early family life. But dance is this wild gift of youth that has to be addressed right out of the chute. experience things afresh.

N-S's programing is sponsored in part by the City of Austin's Cultural Arts Commission



NAOMI SCHLINKE

JAMES TURNER

JAN - FEB 2020

STREETS

ON

Northern-Southern

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