

DIANE AYOTT: BEYOND MEASURE

The Gallery at Barrington Center for the Arts, Gordon College • Wenham, MA • www.gordon.edu/gallery • Through January 28, 2011

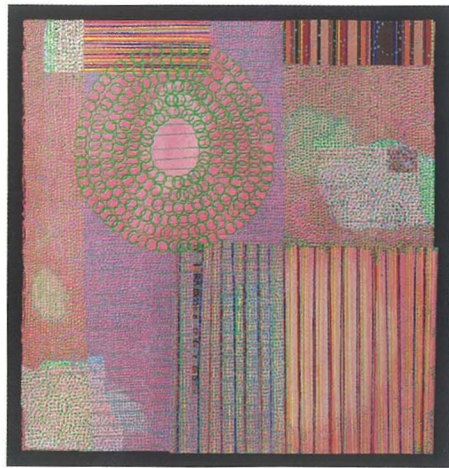
In Ayott's vibrant painting, colors are optically mixed in an abstract style that takes pointillism a step further. Assorted dots, dashes, and repeated stamped patterns are created with a variety of unconventional tools: the stub of a worn paintbrush, plastic boxes and covers, rubber chair leg caps, and, surprisingly, an oval vacuum cleaner attachment.

The exhibition includes mixed media, oil, and acrylic paint applied on panel, paper, or board in diverse sizes. *Upstream* is covered with layers of oil paint and pattern: an orange background layered with dabs of yellow, stamped circles of light blue, green dots, and red lines topped by lavender dashes. The all-over pattern is grid-like but not rigid, leaving room for variations. Edges of the stamped pattern protrude from the surface, as do the textural dots and dashes. The eye moves over the entire painting, taking in the detail and marveling how the colors work together.

Ayott's exceptional skill as a colorist is evident in the gorgeous painting *Floater*; the dazzling peacock blue and orange creates a jewel-

like opulence reminiscent of the geometric abstractions of Gustav Klimt. Also notable is the fearless use of fluorescent colors. In *Witness*, brilliant orange, pink, and green are daringly applied.

In newer works, the underlying grid composition dissolves into free-form shapes. In *Blood Lines*, the serpentine lines of colored dots keep the gaze moving across two canvases, forming a luminous diptych. In *Unpredictable Course*, green, yellow, and orange acrylic paint marks, resembling mosaic tiles,



Diane Ayott, *Snail Mail*, mixed media on paper, 20 x 19½".

spiral and uncoil in circular shapes. Collage, another new element, sometimes adds biographical references. In *Snail Mail*, the novelty of a friend's precious handwritten note is layered into a painted pattern of blue and green enlivened with metallic dots. Pages cut from a teacher's grade book are layered with blue, purple, and green dashes and dots in *Captive*—a telling title, considering Ayott is an associate professor at Montserrat College.

Ayott's meticulous process of painting repeating patterns has a mesmerizing effect. This concentration on a single task becomes a meditation in paint—a focus notable in a culture obsessed with multitasking.

—Susan Mulski