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Hiro Yamagata, Megan Geckler and Matthew Thomas at the Torrance Art Museum

by Garrison Frost

It's entirely possible that the first thing Hiro Yamagata wants people to think upon seeing his new exhibit at the Torrance Art Museum is "colors." For me, however, it was "big." All of the paintings in this exhibit are giant-size, in the 70 inches by 100 inches category.

The title of the exhibition is "Air," and the notes accompanying the show tell us that the bright swaths of color in the acrylic paintings reveal the normally imperceptible fields of color in laser emissions. And maybe they do. Not familiar with laser emissions, I'm not a good person to ask. These paintings do seem to burn right off the walls. In fact – and it's entirely possible that this take reveals more about this writer than the artist – many of these paintings seem to depict some kind of destruction. It's hard for me to look at these as mere representations of pure light energy. Instead, these look like explosions, crashes, man-made things falling back down to earth. One of them, an untitled piece), reminds me of every picture I've ever seen of satellites coming back down to earth, or the Space Shuttle disasters.

Megan Geckler's installation piece, "Fill it up and pour it down the inside," is an ordered geometry of colored plastic ribbon that comes to look like shimmering container. The artist achieves this by carefully attaching individual ribbons to the floor and ceiling, creating a woven, fantastic entity out of thin air.

Matthew Thomas' "Visual Seed Forms" is a collection of works that seems to want to remind us of all those strange parchment drawings we've encountered throughout our lives, the mysteriously simple spheres and lines and diagrams that seem to imply so much though, yet are remarkably simple. The kind of thing Leonardo da Vinci would scrawl in one of his famous notebooks. From this platform, Thomas then takes these images and lends a variety of twists to them, be they melted wax or colored inks. I've always kind of liked this type of art, but have always been at a loss to explain why. So I won't go any further than to say that I liked Thomas' stuff, and spare you the meandering explanation.

Hiro Yamagata, Megan Geckler and Matthew Thomas are at the Torrance Art Museum through Dec. 9

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