

Seemingly Recognizable:
Jackie Brown



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November 13-Dec. 11, 2012



Flecker Gallery
Suffolk County Community College
Selden, NY

Never Be Fooled By Neon

It's color, citrus shades of bright orange and lime green, or the primary hues of cobalt blue and sun yellow, that you notice first in the sculptures and drawings of Jackie Brown. Her vivid flashes of neon blind us momentarily to the complicated and tangled nature of her two and three-dimensional artworks. Like adjusting your eyes to a dim and darkened room, however, her world slowly creeps into focus.

Titled *Seemingly Recognizable*, Brown's environment reveals itself to be an installation about systems, connections and surface. Using "various materials," cleverly leaving the details of her armatures and substructures to our imagination, her sculptural forms move throughout the gallery without concern for the normal constraints of walls, floors, and ceilings.

In the places where we least expect them, skinny, drippy-looking rods of bright orange and chartreuse sprout, grow, and cling to every exhibition surface. Intersecting with circular, brain-like shapes, the rods act like wires or pipes leading to hubs of unknown information. The "brains," their surface visually echoing the lumpy skin of pods and fruit, look exposed and vulnerable as green and orange oozes from inside.

Somewhere in between hard and soft, brittle and strong, wet and dry, *Brain Fruit* has a mad scientist aesthetic in its visual ambiguity.

Though Brown's colors seem drawn from the natural world of plants or the realm of scientific experimentation, her sculptures also describe the man-made and the artificial—her orange is the color of traffic cones and construction signs. This installation, the latest incarnation of her sculpture *Brain Fruit*, references growth and mutation as much as the mechanical sys-



Brain Fruit
detail
installation view
mixed media
2010-2012
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While *Brain Fruit* wants to be seen as "natural," and clearly draws its inspiration from the metaphorical resonance of the fruit itself, her abstract drawings take on a microscopic complexity and perspective. Utilizing an entirely different aesthetic, Brown's drawings consist of cut-away or built-up layers, where it's impossible to tell if we are zooming in or out. Through a series of lines, color fields and dots, we feel as though we are looking deep inside an organism, hoping to discover the system upon which it functions. With titles like *Node*, *Microbe* or *Strata*, the drawings reference a biological complexity that can also be seen in *Brain Fruit*. The most compelling connection between Brown's two and three-dimensional work, however, is one of aesthetic and conceptual difference. Where *Brain Fruit* feels like a result of experimentation and improvisational rule breaking, the drawings look mathematical and calculated. While *Brain Fruit* only provokes us to ask questions, Brown's drawings elicit the sensation that we are misunderstanding intricacies that we have not even yet stopped to contemplate.

The great beauty of abstract art is that we as viewers are allowed room to interpret, and are given the freedom to take liberties with the artist's intent: qualities that Brown makes good use of. Her drawings could be the intertwined insides of our bodies, the ordered electronics of a motherboard or the cells of a plant, and her curiosities would remain the same; how do systems of life function, how can they adapt and change, and what are their limits.

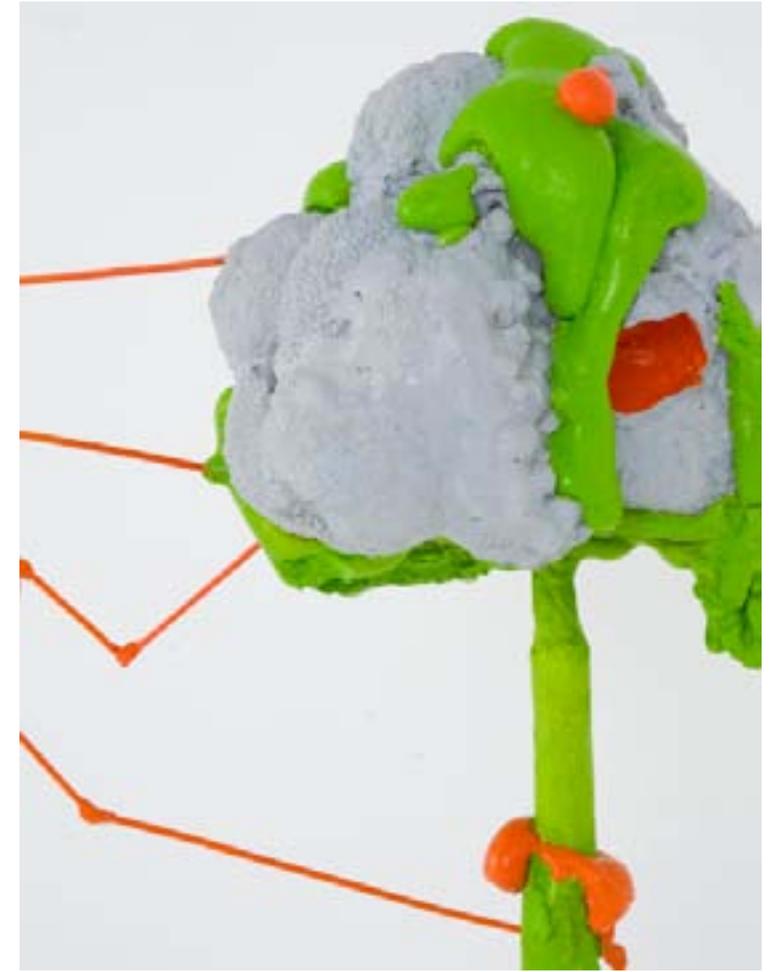
It's her artworks honest search for understanding that allows it to provoke the childlike curiosity and imaginative speculation of its viewers. We should never be fooled by the neon colors or fantastical structures in Jackie Brown's installations, however, as they are a warning. They serve to remind us that biology, like art, is immensely complicated though innately understandable. It's certainly odd that we can survive in a world made up of elements we understand so little about, and Brown's artwork is a playful warning that we'd better not get too comfortable with our sustained ignorance.

Alissa Guzman is a New York City based artist and writer for *White Hot Magazine*.



Brain Fruit
installation view
mixed media
2010-2012

opposite: full view
this page: detail





Surge
24" x 19"
archival ink , graphite,
and watercolor on paper,
2012

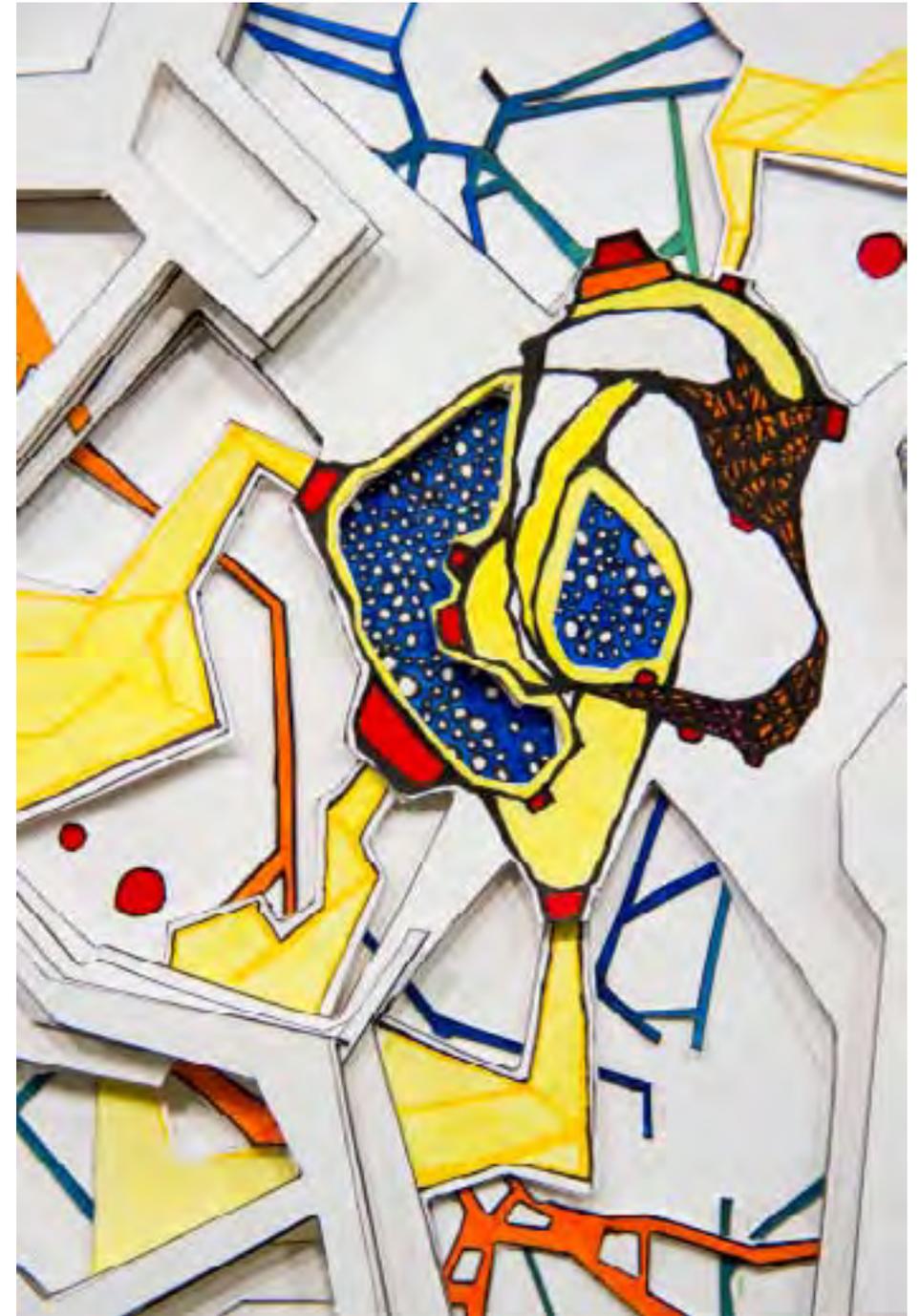
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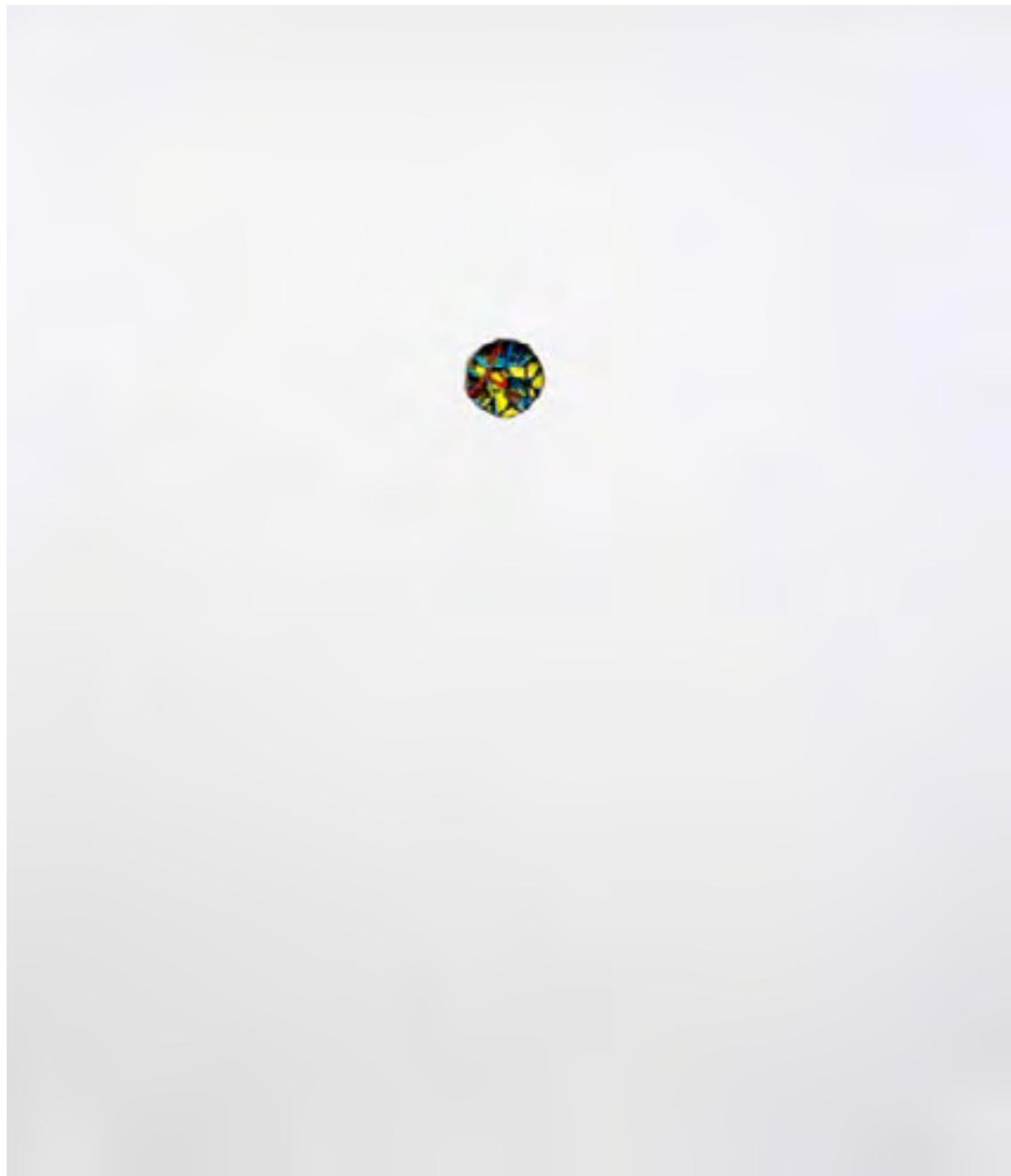




Action Potential
24" x 19"
archival ink
and watercolor
on paper,
2012

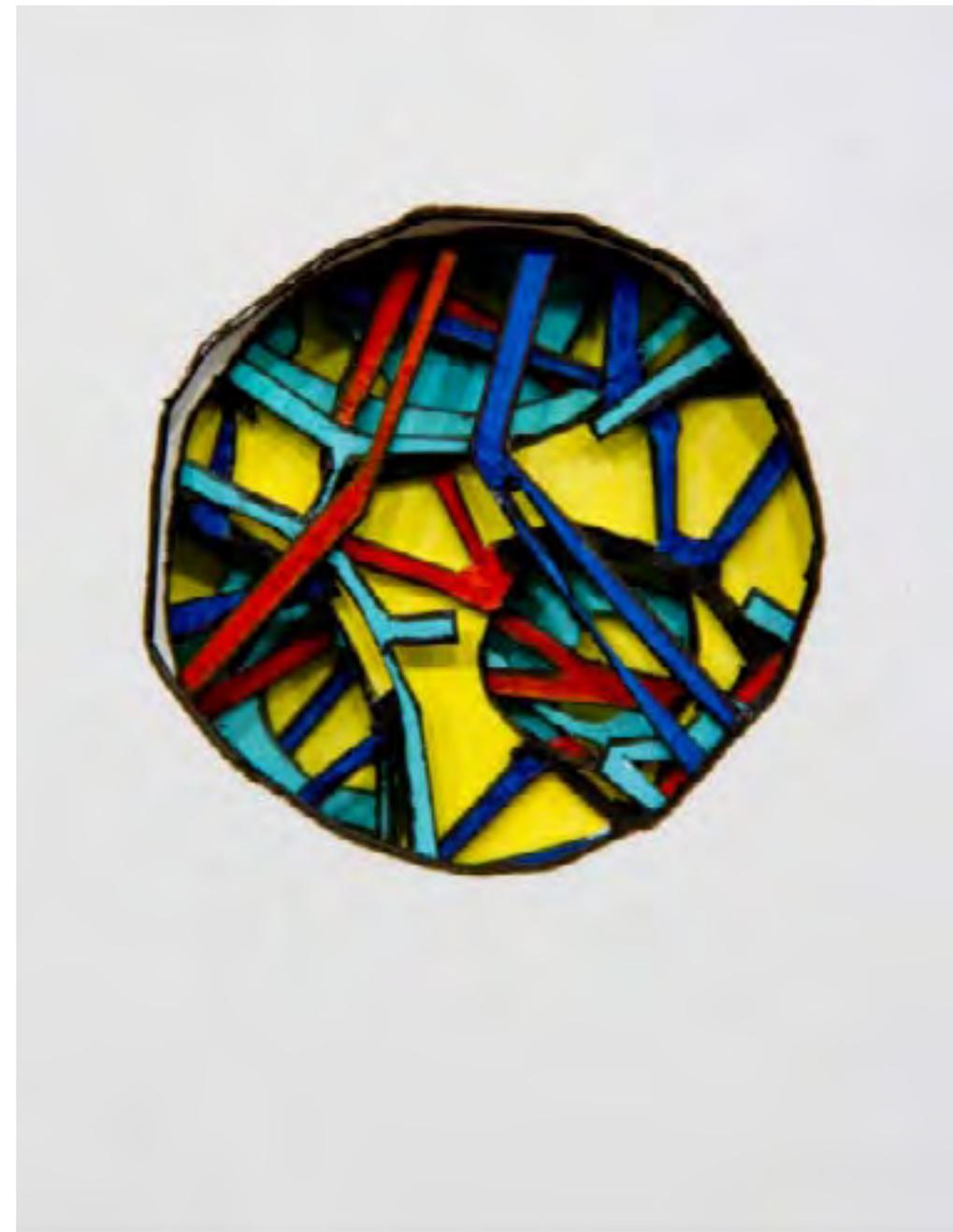
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Strata
17" x 14"
archival ink,
gouache,
and watercolor
on paper,
2012

opposite: full view
this page: detail



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Ammereman Campus
533 College Road
Selden, NY 11784

fleckergallery.org

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Photography: Abigail Volkmann and Jackie Brown
Essay: Alissa Guzman

Flecker Gallery