

# CAVA

Artist X: Willy Richardson



Walkyries Number Three , 41 x 47.5 inches, oil on canvas

## Willy Richardson's Color Theory

Sixteen years ago Willy Bo Richardson was driving down highway 71 in Austin. As a painter consumed with his practice, he was considering color. It was night, the blacktop road burst with color intermittently, revealing the yellow stripes on the street. Time passed and Willy realized he was going the wrong way in relation to his destination. In the midst of this experience, he stopped at

a gas station to reorient. As if by magnetism, he was pulled towards a bag of Doritos. The red and blue bag of Doritos served as a source of discovery, and a yellow chip was inside.

This experience led him to the concept that red and blue **make** yellow. Forget logic, this was a philosophical exercise. Time passed, and yet another “ah-ha moment” showed the artist, via the visible light spectrum, that in fact yellow was between red and blue, which became a theoretical platform for the artist and reconciled the Doritos-moment.

Discovering where a color like yellow comes from, and its relation to other colors would inform the artist’s paintings into the future.

Regarding Willy’s art is deceptively pleasurable—something like the silence before a crescendo. Formal elements are reduced to their essences, and color dominates each composition. “Confluence” is suggestive of concepts that exist beyond its completeness, as if the paint strokes should take life and grow beyond the canvas.

Vertical lines, which are formal strictures for Willy’s work, allow color to excel. The lines are the control group, and the color is then allowed to variably play. I liken verticality to the depth of human experience, whereas horizontal lines are the passage of time.

I would be delighted to find that everyday objects, upon dissection, revealed compositions like “Three Stages Number One,” or “Walkyrie Number Three.” Willy’s paintings look through life experiences to an internal truth—similar to the position of yellow in the color spectrum, or the space that exists between the tiniest particles that make up our material world.

Gastalt psychology says that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This indicates that the space between things matters, too. These concepts uncork the myth that there is finality to anything. In the recurring spiral that is the rabbit hole is where Willy’s work *begins!*

- Katy Kennedy