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THE ADVOCATE

Review: Patterns and Prototypes at CAC

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Longtime curator and Prospect New Orleans founder Dan Cameron has a knack for putting art in context, and this Tina Girouard and Robert Gordy expo at the Contemporary Arts Center is right on the money. Both artists helped shape the direction of American art, yet both became overshadowed. In the late 1960s, Girouard and fellow Louisianians Lynda Benglis, Dickie Landry and Keith Sonnier, helped to launch post-minimalism in New York as a way of injecting sinuous, fluid lines into minimalism's stark rigidity. She and New Orleans native Kendall Shaw also were seminal influences on the Pattern and Design, or P&D, movement in New York in the early 1970s. But one of the greatest P&D painters of all, Robert Gordy, remained in New Orleans until his death at age 52 in 1986. Blending deco patterning with expressionistic and psychedelic flourishes, Gordy produced some of America's more charismatic paintings and prints of the period, and this show provides a welcome window on his and Girouard's accomplishments.

Girouard replaced minimalism's hard edges with soft sinewy fabric and symbolic content as we see in her large *Conflicting Evidence* tapestry. A seasoned performance artist, she also collaborated with Laurie Anderson, Philip Glass and many others who were part and parcel of her exotically patterned life. Many of her and Gordy's works look timeless and vital today while reminding us of Louisiana's major, yet often overlooked, influence on modern American art history.

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