

From: **there-there** jb@there-there.co
Subject: Max Jansons at There-There LA Times Review
Date: October 8, 2018 at 11:23 AM
To: maxjansons@earthlink.net

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Los Angeles Times

Review: Max Jansons paints impossible blossoms with electrifying energy at There-There gallery



By DAVID PAGEL OCT 02, 2018 | 12:25 PM



Max Jansons, "Coqui," 2018, oil on linen, 20 x 23 inches. (Max Jansons and There-There)

Max Jansons' paintings of flower-filled vases look nothing like his paintings of isosceles triangles or his solitary painting of a sharp-angled line that changes color as it ricochets around the picture plane.

Each, in fact, seems to be a world unto itself, a place apart from business as usual where the artist goes to get away from it all and discover what painting can do when left to its own devices: color, shape and brushstrokes.

In Jansons' hands, that's quite a lot. It's a great pleasure to see his idiosyncratic oils on linen at There-There in Hollywood. Intimate and generous and marching to a beat all their own, the L.A. painter's explorations of surface and symbol invite visitors into a world more intense than the real one, which makes you see things differently.



Max Jansons, "Emotional," 2018, oil on linen, 72 x 60 inches, (Max Jansons, There-There, Los Angeles)

His 10 triangle paintings stop you in your tracks. The two biggest, "Malibu Goth (for Alia Raza)" and "Emotional," measure 6 by 5 feet. Each could probably stop traffic on Hollywood Boulevard, its simple symmetry functioning more like a lane barricade than an abstract

painting hanging indoors.

But the real fun begins when you come in for a close look and see what Jansons has done with his paintbrush: squirm its paint-loaded bristles in serpentine paths that cross over and under one another, catching light and making the surface writhe with life. The slippery shiftiness of his brushstrokes collides nicely with the architectural solidity of his compositions.

That movement — of your eyes racing across the paintings' surfaces — is traced by “Reflection,” the single picture of a multicolored line that doesn't let your eye rest.



Max Jansons, “Sphinx,” (detail) 2018, oil on linen, 54 x 66 inches, (Max Janson and There-There, Los Angeles)

But Jansons' flower paintings steal the show. The three biggest, “Panther,” “Eagle” and “Sphinx,” may be the most beautiful paintings on display in all of Los Angeles.

Their colors are supersaturated, denser and more delicious than those that occur in nature. Their flowers are more fabulous than real ones, their petals dressed like supermodels, strutting their stuff on the runway. And Jansons does not let a square inch go to waste: Even the spaces between and among his impossible blossoms hum and buzz with electrifying energy. Artifice never looked better. Nor packed more punch.

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“Max Jansons: Animal Style”

Where: There-There, 4859 Fountain Ave.

When: Through Oct. 31. Closed Sundays and Mondays

Info: (323) 741-8097, there-there.co/



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