

## "Amada Miller: Everything in Tune" at grayDUCK Gallery"

The San Antonio-based artist's new show rings lunar and true

REVIEWED BY WAYNE ALAN BRENNER, FRI., SEPT. 18, 2020

"During NASA's Apollo missions, back when science was truly valued by this country's government, the astronauts who visited the moon conducted experiments to help us better understand what our celestial companion is made of. One of the methods of investigation was to place seismometers on the powdery ground and then crash spent modules nearby. (Because some parts of science are also fun.)

These historic experiments led to the discovery of "moonquakes," vibrations that resonate within the moon's core for so long that scientists described the sensation as "the moon ringing like a bell."

In "Everything in Tune," the San Antonio-based artist Amada Miller represents what she calls "the moon's natural orchestra," having created a series of clear glass bells that have small fragments of real iron meteorites inside as clappers – thus mimicking materials (silica, iron) found on the lunar surface. These handblown handbells – there are at least four dozen of the beautiful things, of differing shapes and sizes – are arranged in a single line atop a

short, wide, whitewashed wall that forms a sort of waist-high sine curve in the gallery's front room. It's so easy to just reach out and pick up one of the bells, give the handle a gentle shake, and hear the delicate peal as suspended iron strikes glass – and visitors are encouraged to do exactly that. (Because some parts of art are also fun.)

So there's that, and that's unusual and evocative and a delight as pure as the silicate glass the bells are made of. The line of handbells might also, in its cinematic starkness, make you flash on Commander Bowman's bedroom mind-trip at the end of Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey – which is never an unwelcome resonance. But there's more of the exhibition in the gallery's farther room: a series of graphite rubbings made to look like close-up photos of the moon's surface. (One especially large rubbing, almost ceiling-to-floor, is in two parts and stitched together. That sewing, gallery owner Jill Schroeder tells us, is an homage to the women who stitched together the astronauts' spacesuits by hand, working skills they'd learned from sewing lingerie.)

Also in that big back room – because Miller, like many makers, isn't content with proficiency in just one or two or three mediums – there's an array of small ceramic vases atop white plinths, and the rough vessels are striking examples of pottery even without the extra sensory surprise. But there is that surprise: When you sniff the vases' openings, you get a faint whiff of gunpowder – what many of the rocks and dust brought back from Luna supposedly smell like. ("Supposedly," but we're not going to argue with the likes of Buzz Aldrin, whose mother's maiden name was, by the way, Moon.)

Can we end our review without saying that in this show, Amada Miller has really hung the moon? In any case, the assertion rings true.



"Amada Miller: Everything in Tune"  
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www.grayduckgallery.com  
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