

ART REVIEWS

Lita Albuquerque

Peter Blake Gallery, Laguna Beach
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Since 1998, Lita Albuquerque has been continuing her career-long pursuit to penetrate the mysteries of the universe in a new series of paintings that share the title "Auric Field." Generally square in format, and ranging in size from 16"x 16" to 48"x 48", they present the simple relief of a gold disc radiating a field of pure energy (most frequently represented in Albuquerque's favored cobalt blue) into a dense black background. At viewing distance, the eye, bedazzled by so much radiance, finds it hard to determine whether the disc is concave or convex, and ends up in ecstatic indecision, pulsating with the energy of light. Given patience and surrender to their power, these paintings can easily swallow the viewer into the force field of their space, dark and luminous as the universe itself.



To achieve the density this feat requires, Albuquerque applies fifty to sixty coats of gesso to a wood panel, sanding the surface constantly to perfection, then adds as many layers of pigment. And there's more here than the heady pleasures of optical seduction: fascinated with the universality of the 13th century Fibonacci mathematical system, said to inform all natural structures from individual human and plant cells to the stars, she embeds its sequenced numbers in the surface of many of these objects, reminding the eye that its task is also analytical.

Aside from the paintings and some spectacular, small-scale planetary drawings, Albuquerque includes two pedestal objects with powdered pigment in small boxes, and a "book" constructed of steel and glass whose transparent "pages" offer the viewer a multi-layered montage of silk-screened text, astronomical charts, sequenced numbers, and image. Appropriately, one key image is the bee, who transforms nature's pollen into the golden light and sweet taste of honey, emblematic of the transformative purpose of her work.

---Peter Clothier is a Los Angeles based art critic and has written numerous [articles](#), [art reviews](#), [art catalogues](#), [book reviews](#), and [essays](#).