

# ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS:Helen Rae, Tierra del Sol Gallery, LA

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By Erica Rawles

Helen Rae creates bold, textured drawings with colored pencil on paper, taking the spreads in fashion magazines as inspiration. Folds and changes in tone are conveyed with solid lines rather than gradual shading, making her works feel just as abstract and dynamic as the patterns and lighting of the clothes being modeled.

Rae's underwater series is especially majestic in its mosaic-like detail and illusion of suspended movement. In *Untitled (June 12 2018)*, a woman wearing what appears to be a red dress bends backward in a dramatic arch, but her head and face never materialize clearly. Instead, the woman's body seems to be fragmented by blue and white streaks of water and light. Even a crop of one of these drawings could function as a complete artwork given their vivid density.



Helen Rae, *Untitled (June 12, 2018)*

The busyness of this series distinguishes it from the other works in the show, many of which feel architectural in their prioritization of simple forms. Their backgrounds are often comprised of large shapes and color planes. In *Untitled (July 16 2018)*, the nose of a woman in profile edges toward the side of the paper as she leans forward. Lines of various weights make up the pattern of her bright pink and purple garment, while solid blocks of cream and azure constitute the background, in which the only subtle variation is the direction of Rae's marks, pressed firmly into the paper.