

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS



View of “Jennie C. Jones: alternate takes.” 2018.

CHICAGO

Jennie C. Jones

PATRON

673 N Milwaukee Ave

February 3–March 18, 2018

Equal parts spare and sumptuous, Jennie C. Jones’s exhibition is a celebration of return, in more ways than one. It’s the artist’s first solo exhibition in this city, where she lived while attending the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the early 1990s. Moreover, the works on view show Jones returning to earlier experiments with the materiality of sound, embracing modes that predate the more formally resolved works, commonly called her “acoustic paintings,” for which she is best known.

Referencing the practice of takes—the studio recordings occasionally released as alternate tracks—the exhibition follows several strands of inquiry into the tactile, embodied nature of music. In a suite of untitled works from 2014, Jones applied saturated washes of ink to blank and disoriented bars from sheet music, a premonition of the sonic gestures that would soon appear in larger paintings such as *Emanating Hum*, 2016, amid sound-absorbing panels and vibrant colors. As usual, the artist uses ready-mades and a Minimalist ethos to facilitate material conversations between modernist abstraction and the parallel developments in avant-garde music that were largely pioneered by African American artists.

In the site-specific work *Final Take: Same Bridge on the Syncopated*, 2018, a small parametric speaker throws sound into a corner of jet-black panels that hover against a

section of red-painted wall. The audio is sourced and abstracted from a 1958 Chicago recording session of the jazz pianist Ramsey Lewis, though the notes that prevail are interstitial moments between takes when the sound engineer speaks. Here, as in the rest of the installation, Jones revels in the affective power of silence and lack, staging encounters with forgotten histories and extra-visual phenomena through the bodies of her viewers.

— *Jared Quinton*