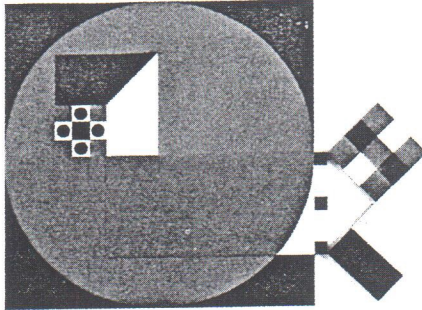


MARILYN LERNER

JOHN GOOD

Marilyn Lerner's paintings on eccentrically shaped wood panels with low relief and paper recall constructivist and De Stijl geometries along with those of the American modern movement, but it is the flavor of the decorative and metaphysical geometries of Asia that gives



MARILYN LERNER, FORMS OF EXPERIENCE, 1988.
OIL ON WOOD, 48" x 65 1/2".

her work a special kick. Lerner has travelled extensively around Bali and other south Asian countries, she has absorbed a fair amount of Tantric philosophy and is an avid listener to Javanese gamelan music. Unlike many abstract painters, Lerner's experience with various aspects of Asian culture is direct, as opposed to the filtration of a theosophy textbook or the isolation from the fabric of everyday life encountered in a museum. The rich coloration and labyrinthine networks of diagrammatic spaces opening, closing, and interpenetrating each other are not specifically symbolic of any particular aspects of Asian metaphysics, but they do convey something of the erotic opulence and emphasis on structures of multiplicity and proliferation inherent in some Eastern cosmological systems.

We certainly don't associate opulence and eroticism with Western geometric painting, ascribing to it instead the exclusionary values of rationality and self-critique, concepts of personal and cultural progress that presumably carry us forward and upward as impurities are jettisoned like sandbags from a hot air balloon. By comparison, Lerner's work goes nowhere, that is, it doesn't proceed to any "end" of painting. Her geometries tend to seek complexity rather than simplicity, they unfold into themselves collapsing the macrocosmic into the microscopic. Her paint is luxuriously applied, building up on the surface into sensuous, opaque skins of intense color. She has pushed the low relief of her panels to the point where certain designs are now cut through the panel to expose the wall and open another range of spatial complexity. This is an art of adornment and multiplicity presented with iconic clarity.

Stephen Westfall

Flash Art

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