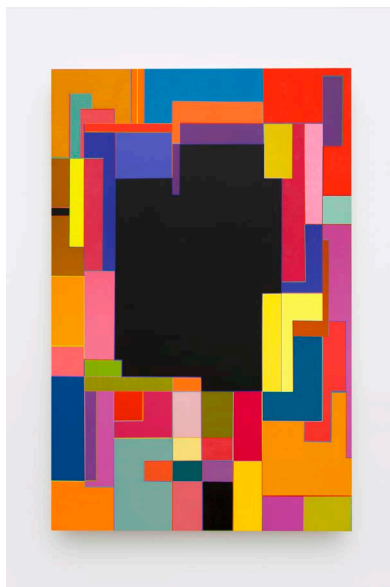


# HYPERALLERGIC

***A Dozen Memorable Exhibitions from 2018***

**John Yau**

**December 29, 2018**



Marilyn Lerner, "Black Center" (2017), oil on wood, 40 x 26 inches

In a turbulent year marked by increasing nationalism, constant attacks on the free press, a retreat from dealing seriously with climate change, and a further, sanctioned erosion of women's rights, my roundup of memorable exhibitions is nothing more or less than a list of shows that made a lasting impression on me, mostly by opening my eyes and mind to something challenging. These shows reminded me that nothing should be taken for granted, whether it's drawing with a pencil or crayon, painting with a brush or broom, writing a line of poetry, or reading and interpreting text, from the classical to the arcane. My list is not arranged hierarchically.

[...]

8. Marilyn Lerner is an outlier in the domain of abstract art: her inspirations include Hilma af Klint, game boards, tantric art, and trips to Turkey, Africa, and Southeast Asia during the 1970s and '80s. While her work shares something with two other underrated painters of cross-cultural hybrids, Simon Gouverneur and Stephen Mueller, Lerner has long followed her own path. Her debut exhibition at Kate Werble Gallery, *Marilyn Lerner: Walking Backward Running Forward*, reminded me that Lerner's work is unlike anything else being done. That should be a good thing, but in an age of copying and plagiarism, originality seems to be getting short shrift.