

BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

Ideas of Order

Veering between labyrinth and billboard, Gorky and Stuart Davis, Mark Brousseau is having a good time here and so are we. These are spirited narratives, some possessed of an architectural exactness, others full of excited gesture—all of them characterized by animated conversation edging toward declaration. His color sense is musical, his black brushwork calligraphic.

The guy is funny- "Oblivious" is anything but-its deep avocado letters edging a Mexican orange jagged bearing a jazzy torqued window into window into a yellow rectangle mirroring a fleeing purple square.

We get another take on his multiple windows in "Aware"-nine if I'm counting right—each square drawing us farther and farther back to his ultimate mustard yellow awareness framed in warm wavering gold-Howard Hodgkin Americanized without the muzzy squiggles.

No roundnesses in those two paintings. All is edged, although sometimes Mark allows himself some lovely hued softnesses— achieved through overpainting perhaps?

With "Attractive" we get his take on origami as he surrenders his squares for a cluster of triangles exploding out from the picture's center in the atomic collider of his imagining as a broad tapering-out crimson force comes whamming in from the right toward the anvil on the left, an opening-out purple parallelogram. Squeezed to the top of all this new physics drama there's a serene white triangle in the center framed in mustard and supported by a fine corrugated backdrop of dry earth tan and apple green. It is all edges, no roundnesses anywhere except for a bit of Frankenthaler staining in the lower left corner. The greens in this painting are wonderful.

From origami to kites-big-scale origami-or so I read "Sporadic" with its filaments and tangles of string, the whole shebang floating miles above some wonderful landscape of solid red and then straight down below narrow white fields laced in blue like Ruisdael's scenes of linen drying.

Two more kites, diaphanous these, in "Simultaneous"-space vehicles really, each carrying its balanced squarish gondolas out into the golden ether, triangled undulations of turquoise and sea blues below while above a scumbled blackness that isn't quite blackness

And then a cityscape: "Modernizing" that surely will appeal to John Moore with its bluish purple bridge columns supporting industrial squares and a cascading jumble of triangles falling off to the left. The action in these paintings-the line of force-is always right to left.

For architecture, "Urban," with its roundnesses tempering the corrugated blue steel fading to purple siding on the left.

Alan Armstrong, May 2010
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