

Art in America

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Valerie Jaudon

Von Lintel

Consisting of jumpy, sharply delineated white shapes inscribed across the lustrous taupe of linen, Valerie Jaudon's recent paintings, meticulously executed as always, present yet another variation of her signature lexicon of forms. Six of the eight works are uniformly square in format, and even the exceptions, *Transcription* (2008) and *Opsis* (2007), a horizontal and vertical rectangle respectively, are internally ordered into sections that are square or very near square, a device used throughout this exhibition. An original member of the Pattern and Decoration movement of the 1970s, Jaudon has mapped her chosen terrain for more than 30 years, in dialogue with not only modernist strategies but also the interlacements of Celtic manuscripts, Islamic calligraphy, Spanish Baroque ironwork, the architectural motifs of Roman mosaics and textiles from a multitude of cultures and periods.

It seems at first as if each square section within a painting is similar to the others, only reversed or rotated. Then you realize that while there may be method in Jaudon's mania, or mania in her method, you can go crazy trying to figure out all her combinations and permutations, which are, of course, endless. The blocky white shapes and truncated serpentine are densely packed but do not overlap. Instead, they are carefully positioned so that they touch lightly, most often at a corner, and each unit is linked, at least at one point, to its neighbor in order to form an interconnected network, the overall pattern asymmetrical, puzzle-like. Snippets of curved or straight bands

of equal width that amount to around two dozen or so repeated shapes, the elements resemble an elegant array of pasta—elbow macaroni, say—and might be considered an alphabet or grammar of geometric forms.

The titles, which are all linguistic in reference, equate the visual and verbal: *Antonym* (2008), *Alphabet* (2006), *Phrase* (2007), *Verbatim* (2007). Each crisply outlined small element is formed by several strokes of softening, succulent white paint, like a weave, restoring the idiosyncrasy of the handmade mark to what otherwise might be mechanical, depersonalized. The raw linen, with its own texture, its own weave, glistens with primer, and while just the result of the process, the sheen of the ground combined with the lushness of the brushwork add a welcome and unexpected opulence to these ultimately not so rationalized, hard-edge, nonobjective paintings.

—Lilly Wei

Valerie Jaudon: *Alphabet*, 2006, oil on linen, 42 inches square; at Von Lintel.

