

For Stern's poetic show "The Talking Cure," the artist paired a dozen of her ceramic sculptures with writers who created monologues for them. Actors' recorded voices were uploaded to the Cloud, and gallery visitors could use their iPhones to hear the figures speak.

A one-armed boy with a giant, toothy mouth ranted about women and bagels. Another boy, his feet tied to cement blocks, narrated his story of heartbreak. And a girl with a steel ball lodged in her chest asked, "Do you love me? It's hard, I know. The trick is letting the metal cool til it's a rock." Best of all was a young woman trying desperately to accept a threesome: herself, her guy, and the small, pointy-eared creature he has brought to bed. "Of course I like him. Why wouldn't I like him?" she began gamely. This collaborative multimedia art show, which included drawings as well as sculpture, was funny, chilling, and exhilarating. —Mona Molarsky

## Valerie Jaudon

Von Lintel

Valerie Jaudon is a veteran investigator of abstraction's potential, producing pristine, precisely conceived schemes, which she has varied, often just slightly, for each new body of work. Her concentration is formidable and her mental conceptions assume explicit physical form in her canvases and works on paper. Each work is a system unto itself.

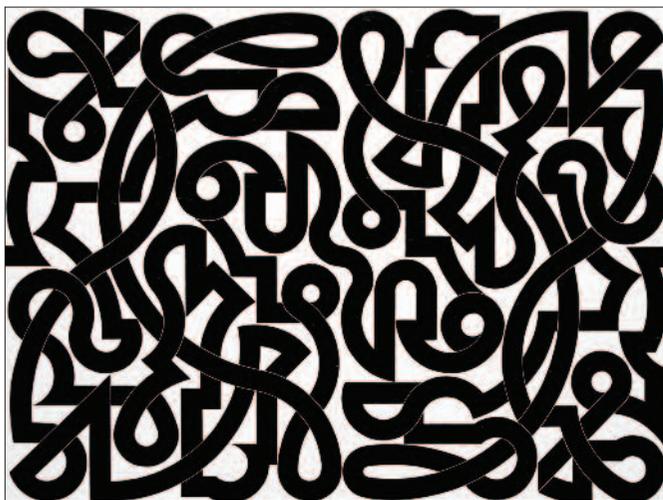
In this strikingly concise show of ten large paintings, each image had the quality of a maze, a puzzle, or a Byzantine wall carving. In works like *Glyph* (2012),

composed of nine squares—each linked by a band extending improbably from an adjacent square—we have the sense of chapters in a book, one developing from the last, but in no real order. It conjures those "experimental" novels of the 1960s with interchangeable chapters, in which the reader determines the sequence. But where to begin? The sense of an undefined plan is compounded by a tension between figure and ground that doubly confounds certainty.

Rather than remotely referencing nature or the figure, these works seem to invoke writing, if not language. Call it a pattern of nonverbal communication. We are led through curves and bends and intersecting lines—all mimicking the flow of writing, of speaking, of thinking. The line leads but does not terminate. Often it runs to the edge of a canvas, implying infinite progression and a story without end.

These paintings were striking and graphic, with white paint on raw tan linen, as in the 42-inch-square *Essay* (2012), or black on white canvas, as in the 54-by-72-inch *Archive* (2012), or white on black, as in the 54-inch-square *Glyph*. And they are highly refined and elegant. We follow the rhythm of their execution, the repetitions, and the apparently circular arguments. These works, like maps, like library systems, like charts, suggest that there is a key to understanding, but they also yield the thrill of being forever enigmatic and inconclusive.

—Barbara A. MacAdam



Valerie Jaudon, *Archive*, 2012, oil on canvas, 54" x 72". Von Lintel.

## UP NOW

### 'The Art of Scent 1889–2012'

Museum of Arts and Design  
Through February 24

Perfume has been around since at least the time of the ancient Egyptians, but the production of scents was mastered with the introduction of molecular synthetic elements in the late 19th century. This interactive and intriguing exhibition traces the history of industrially designed



Mod Wall for the scent *Trésor*, installation view. Museum of Arts and Design.

perfumes from the invention of Aimé Guerlain's *Jicky* in 1889 to the brand's more abrasive untitled concoction from 2010.

The goal of this show, according to curator Chandler Burr, is to validate perfumery as an art, which can be appreciated and understood in circumstances quite different from those of sniffing cards or being spritzed at department-store cosmetics counters.

Here, each scent is presented in its purest form—without a bottle or packaging—in a minimalist setting created by architectural firm Diller Scofidio + Renfro. The viewer enters an entirely white space featuring indentations, or niches, in the wall, which serve as sniffing stations; product descriptions are projected onto the wall beside each opening. As the scent-delivery system electronically senses a visitor, a puff of water-based scent is emitted, offering a private olfactory experience without subjecting audiences to a dissonant shower of aromas.

The exhibition ostensibly demonstrates the originality of each scent, such as

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