

# Weekend

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## The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 2003

### Valerie Jaudon

*Von Lintel Gallery  
555 West 25th Street  
Chelsea  
Through April 26*

If there were such a thing as contemporary Sufi painting, it might look like Valerie Jaudon's work. One of the best of the original Pattern and Decoration painters, Ms. Jaudon has been painting intricate, hard-edged patterns with a Middle Eastern flavor for more than two decades. With her five gorgeous new paintings, she brings color and light to the fore.

Each picture features patterns of curvy, linear segments, painted in solid colors, over smeary plaid or vertically streaked fields, painted in translucent glazes. This sets up a play between a crisp foreground rhythm and the atmospheric, luminous, background. But it is the unabashedly lush color, enhanced by glossy varnishing, that is most captivating: bright pink or yellow forms over fiery backgrounds of orange and red, or fruity blue over a glowing plaid of cool blues and greens.

The sensory seduction would be enough, but there are metaphorical overtones as well. Suggesting, as they do, antique Islamic ornamentation, the symmetrical, emblematic foreground patterns are like temple gates to a realm of mystical enlightenment. There is a lesson here for those who find it hard to reconcile hedonistic and spiritual desires.

KEN JOHNSON

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