



Valerie Jaudon

Von Lintel

It is unlikely that Valerie Jaudon gave thanks to David Brewster (1781–1868) before hanging this splendid suite of seven paintings. But it was Brewster, who, in 1816, invented the kaleidoscope, which very much appears to have been Jaudon's point of departure.

The essence of these lush works, where shapes that might be hieroglyphics or letters in an alien alphabet are deployed over a densely colored field, was symmetry. Jaudon paints at the threshold separating order and chaos, where the human ability to impose structure on the chaotic flow of the universe expresses itself. Her order is not political or moral; rather, her paintings are profound meditations on the process by which artistic inspiration translates itself into the work of art: the



Valerie Jaudon, *Heart of the Matter*, 2004, oil on canvas on board, 48" x 48", Von Lintel.

kaleidoscopic whirl of disparate pieces must be stopped so the tiny, fixed utopia of a painting can come into being.

Heart of the Matter (2004), with its brilliant play of color (the truly sensual element in her work), exemplifies her will to order. Not only does one fiery side replicate the other, but the entire canvas is itself a 48-by-48-inch square. The background mirrors the action taking place on its surface, where Jaudon has inscribed another symmetry. Instead of the smooth plane characteristic of her earlier work, her brushwork patterns here carefully crisscross one another atop enigmatic signs. These elements of texture do not disrupt Jaudon's surfaces—mirrors in her prior style—but, rather, constitute a species of signature, Jaudon's invisible presence. —Alfred Mac Adam