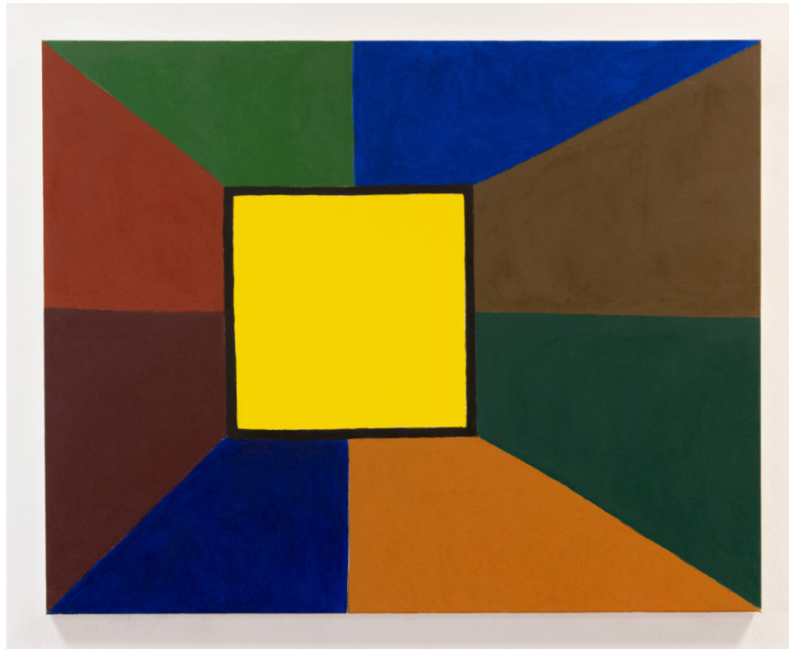


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## Six Short Takes on Painting Exhibitions in New York

by John Mendelsohn



**Harriet Korman**, *Untitled*, 2022, oil on canvas, 24×30 in. Courtesy of the artist and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York

In her exhibition, *Portraits of Squares*, Harriet Korman (full disclosure: my spouse), extends her pursuit of painting that is abstract and structured, but activated by color and by the feeling that we are encountering a consciousness at work. Here are ten recent works, all 24×36 in., made of intuitive, hand-painted geometric forms, with the emphasis on a single square. One canvas from 1979 is also being shown. In the work from the last two years, the square is set within a matrix which varies from concentric bands, to a grid of squares and rectangles, to a perspectival vortex. The square that is the subject of each “portrait” is thus both an independent entity with its own character, and emergent from the life which engendered it.

The mood in these works is by turn introspective and declarative, with a willingness to let the works’ basic elements take the artist on a trip to the inner life of geometric painting. There we sense distant echoes of ancestors: Mondrian and Albers, traditional quilts, and other, older forms of abstraction. But what is most compelling is that with the plain means at hand – resonant color and formal composition – this artist has created a visual fugue that unfolds like music.

**Harriet Korman: *Portraits of Squares***. Thomas Erben Gallery, 526 W. 26th St., New York. January 18 – March 2, 2024