

Harriet Korman

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Harriet Korman at Lennon, Weinberg

In her latest show, Harriet Korman continues in much the same vein as she has for the past few years, and, in fact, the earliest works among these 18 paintings and four pastels date to 2001. There is something delightfully stubborn about this endeavor, in which Korman conceives an all-over composition of intersecting shapes and fills them in with solid colors (a few are brushy, but most are not). The forms are roughly geometric, with edges that wobble slightly—triangles, oblongs, squares and circles as well as the more complicated sections left over in between. They are always the same scale in relation to the frame and to each other—not too big, avoiding hierarchies, and not too small, eliminating the effect of scenic distance. In some of the works, a different color is assigned to every shape, but even where colors are occasionally repeated, there is everywhere the sense of a compulsion to ecumenically mete out hues. The result is cheerful, to be sure, but only faux naïve; a long, careful look reveals a sure and seasoned hand.

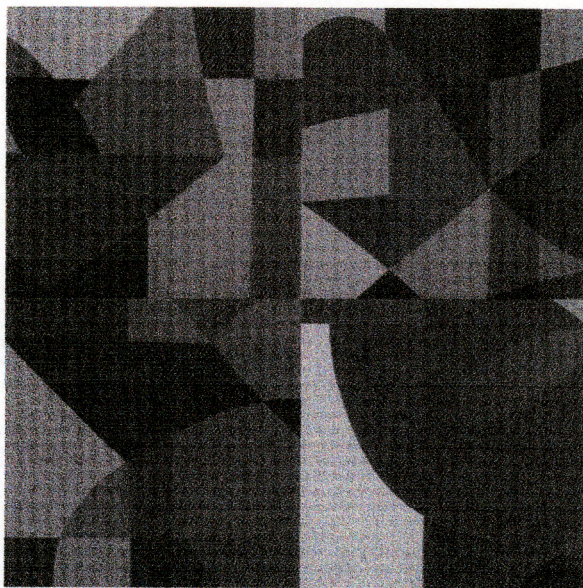
Most of the paintings are of medium size, though two multi-paneled works are grander: *Can Be Joined Any Way* (2002; 72 by 72 inches), in four parts that really can be assembled at the whim of the person hanging it, and an un-

titled diptych (2001; 60 by 96 inches). Only a few triangles interrupt the mosaic of squares and rectangles within the latter—just enough to convey the impression that the composition is slowly moving off to the right, like a ship's bow. Light yellow predominates around the edges, maroon and brown at the center, giving it a kind of coolness at its heart, like the interior of a thick-walled house on a hot summer's day.

Three paintings from 2004, each 36 by 48 inches, felicitously hung together in the main gallery, conjured up early modern still life. The forms within break down into shapes like fruits and gourds, and some of the interstitial shapes might almost be bits of ground peering through—something of the tablecloth, say, in a Cézanne. Korman's unmodulated colors, placed side by side, bring to mind the way Matisse flattened a space by establishing chromatic uniformity in supposedly disparate elements.

Korman included a number of pastels in which an aggressive black line activates a looping composition in what may be a single gesture. Only a few areas are colored in, and roughly. The pastels recall early works by Elizabeth Murray, Korman's contemporary. They also go a long way toward explaining the energetic quality of Korman's most recent paintings, which break down more often into swooping arabesques and tilting ovals than serenely rectilinear grids.

—Faye Hirsch



Harriet Korman: *Can Be Joined Any Way*, 2002, oil on canvas, quadriptych, 72 by 72 inches overall; at Lennon, Weinberg.