

**New York's Top Ten**

*David Ebony*

**Cora Cohen At Jason McCoy**

*Sept. 10 – Nov. 1, 1997*



*Sphinx*, 25 x 19" (63.5 x 48.3 cm)  
oil, pigment, polyurethane on linen

On view in this show is a particularly intense group of works by New York painter Cora Cohen. The artist recently had to step away from painting on canvas for a while and spent nearly a year in Cologne, concentrating on works on paper and vellum, and looking at lots of Northern European art. The paintings on view here are the first works she produced since her return home.

The drama of Cohen's painting centers on her struggle for clarity. She admits that she often finds herself "tempering a drama." Her abstract canvases are battlefields where the artist acts as mediator in conflicts between form and color, between gesture and structure. She never lets one entity dominate the picture. In each canvas, a unique and complex struggle takes place, but Cohen's painterly decisions are consistent, and ultimately correct, even when her solution is irresolution.

In one large canvas, a dark brown and black shape like a mountain in the lower left comes close to overpowering the surface. But the artist neutralizes the mass with delicate touches of turquoise and pink in the upper right. The largest painting on view, the approximately 9-by-7-foot *Terrains Vagues*, which the artist worked on for

six years, presents gray ground covered with countless incidents of contention, all of which are somehow defused. One of the most intriguing works, *Sphinx*, features a richly textured dark brown background and a prominent yellow shape that looks like a fist grasping a sawed-off club. Here, a conflict erupts between figuration and abstraction, but, once again, the artist does not take sides.