

October 23-30, 1997

**Cora Cohen**  
*at Jason McCoy*



*Terrains Vagues*, 1991, 97, 104 x 77"  
copper, enamel, Flashe, marble dust, oil, oil mediums,  
pastel, pigment, polyurethane on linen

Over the past ten years, Cora Cohen's work has avoided the hackneyed vocabulary of contemporary painting, exploring abstraction with lush and expertly rendered images.

The first work you see upon entering Cohen's latest exhibition is titled *The Abject-As-Intermediary*. Here, a viscous, impenetrable fluid pools at the bottom of the canvas, directly above, the paint is as wet and matted as damp animal fur. Most of these paintings straddle a similarly odd range of effects (it's as if *Grizzly Adams*

and *Battlestar Galactica* were fighting for control over Cohen's psyche). Pieces dense with brushstrokes that resemble human scars alternate with canvases conveying infinite space. Some passages of pure painting seem to dive deep into the canvas; others float diaphanously on its surface.

Cohen's paintings can allow you to feel as though you were exploring unknown territory, tentatively pushing through thick pigment to discover what lies beneath. *Terrains Vagues*, the largest painting in this exhibition, resembles an exploded galaxy. *Won From the Heath* features short strokes of deep violet united to form a dense headland of bramble and heather. In "*Nor knows he makes the shadow he pursues*," (a line from a Coleridge poem), the same handling of paint that filled the bottom of *The Abject-As-Intermediary* appears, denser and more desiccated. In the foreground, a dark shadow seems to creep forward.

This same vague suggestion of an image is also evident in *Sphinx*, a small painting that features a splash of color resembling a hand squirting liquid. This shape is nestled snugly into an otherwise dense field of paint. There is little here to suggest a traditional figure-ground relationship; in fact, the two form a unified element. This fusion is what allows Cohen to define her terrain and take you to new places.

– *Yvette Brackman*