

ARTnews

The New Abstraction

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Excerpt

The abstract revival brings back into view the intensively inscribed, nonobjective, but strangely thoughtful drawings of veteran Conceptualist William Anastasi, the nervous gestural painting of Cora Cohen, and the architectural abstractions of Joan Waltemath. It also introduces young emerging artists like Torben Giehler, who unites nature, technology, and psychology in works that combine digital and conventional media and play with spatial reconfigurations.

Some painters are reappearing and taking unexpected turns, like Op star Larry Poons, famous for his dancing dots, who showed densely worked, surprisingly impressionistic compositions still engaged in optical tactics but of a more subtle sort at the Danese gallery in New York last winter.

Meanwhile, shows such as “Elemental Form,” at L&M Arts last fall, have featured some of the best works of the high Minimalists, with major pieces by masters of the 1960s and ’70s like Sol LeWitt and Carl Andre.

Bridging the long-established and the young, techno-savvy artists is a group, ranging from Jeff Elrod—who shows with Fredericks & Freiser and essentially paints with his computer mouse on flat-colored computer-screen-like surfaces, merging the look and ideas of old media with those of the new—to Grotjahn, represented by Anton Kern Gallery, who, in a kind of quiet Op mode, sharply but subtly vectors into space with improbable colors and acute diagonal lines to establish a disorienting visual field.

-Barbara MacAdam