

ROSENBERG + KAUFMAN FINE ART

Dominique Nahas - 1999

Review

CLAIRE SEIDL

Claire Seidl, in her current exhibition at Rosenberg + Kaufman shows renewed and invigorated painting that should not surprise her many admirers who have come to expect nothing less of her. A painter whose abstract, over-all rhythms and lyrical lines of paint give off multiple readings, Seidl's fluid architecture of knitted painterly space has as much to do with allusions to atmospheric conditions or imaginary land masses as they do with the use of an extended grammar of calibrated gestures whose surprising combinations resist easy interpretations.

These new paintings have a varied tonal quality filled with more nuance than ever before. What is in evidence is Claire Seidl's signature gestural paint strokes that act as force fields shifting optically and dimensionally against and through the picture plane. In looking at her new work, I thought of Seidl's surfaces as a water line: the eye is invited to skim over the surface, to enter underneath just below the surface or to plunge into deep watery depths and then resurface for more exhilarated movement.

No Sign of You, 1998, is a painting that optically vibrates with light-filled ochres and blue greens that is constructed in such a way as to demand that the eye moves through it and around the passages of

reflected color. The painter seems to sculpt with her watery effects as her soft-shouldered, mist and wave-like gestural strokes create shimmering abstract reliefs and indentations of space as in Breathing Room, 1998.

With its elegiac over-all tonalities and amazing counterpoints of saturated light sizzling over the surface, Breathing Room is one of the many prizes in the gallery. With its authoritative size it has an abundance of pictorial drama and real punch that seems to make it vibrate against the wall. No wonder. There is an almost tumultuous operatic quality to this work that surprises both in its delicacy and ferocity of expression. Here a dark interior abstract space seems to erupt with glimmers of light that cascade at the middle left. These opulent effects illuminate a dark interiorized space allowing the eye to excavate into layers of primordial light.

Seidl has a command of sizzling ochres and umbers and verdant greens. These are layered just so giving the viewer that sensation that we are peering through the crack of a cosmic cave and seeing only in part a vast network of glowing rivulets of space cascading deep within its recesses. A strong exhibition worth the visit.