

# LENNON, WEINBERG, INC.

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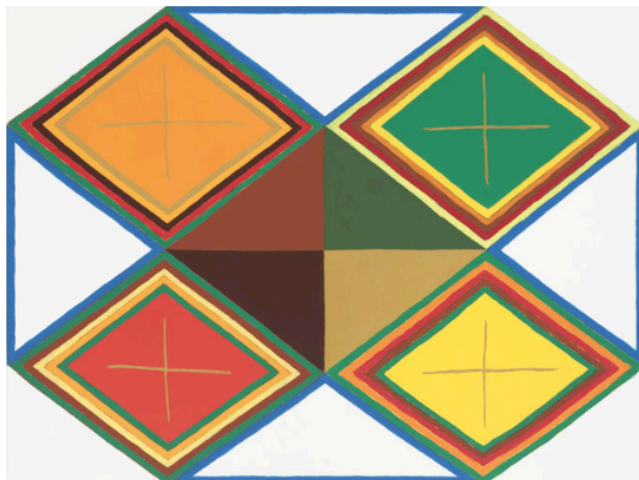
## Harriet Korman

**Smith, Roberta. "Harriet Korman: 'Line or Edge, Line or Color: New Paintings and Drawings'", The New York Times, October 30, 2014.**

### The New York Times

#### ART & DESIGN

#### Harriet Korman: 'Line or Edge, Line or Color: New Paintings and Drawings'



An untitled 2014 painting by Harriet Korman, whose work features a rough-hewed geometry of interlocking shapes. Courtesy of the artist and Lennon, Weinberg, New York

Harriet Korman established her faith in freehand drawing in the early 1970s. As a briefly hot, emerging artist, she first showed at Galerie Ricke in Cologne and later at 112 Greene Street in New York and also in two Whitney Biennials. At that point, she used one layer of white paint over a few lines of blue oil stick, making transparently simple but evocative abstractions that would shame much of today's zombie formalism.

But Ms. Korman wanted more. Her spontaneous mark-making became dense and layered and, by 2000, had coalesced into a rough-hewed geometry of interlocking shapes. Her only rules: Colors were straight from the tube, and rulers were not allowed. That her unflinchingly bright motifs were hand-drawn added a noticeable optical wobble.

Ms. Korman's devotion to this scheme has slowly paid off, especially in her excellent new paintings. In the best, line once more takes an active role — as suggested by the show's title, "Line or Edge, Line or Color." Colored lines parallel the inside edges of some shapes, creating a spatial play that is further enhanced by the reintroduction of white, long absent.

It takes a moment to see that each ceaselessly fluctuating composition has nearly the same symmetrical infrastructure: a central diamond subdivided into rectangles or triangles. A series of oil stick drawings displays further variations and sometimes ventures toward a looseness that harks back to her earliest efforts.

Partly by simply letting her hand show, Ms. Korman's new paintings expand on the implications of Josef Albers's nesting squares, attesting to the inexhaustibility of both color and geometry.

#### HARRIET KORMAN

'Line or Edge, Line or Color: New Paintings and Drawings'

Lennon, Weinberg Inc.

514 West 25th Street, Chelsea

Through Saturday

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## Harriet Korman

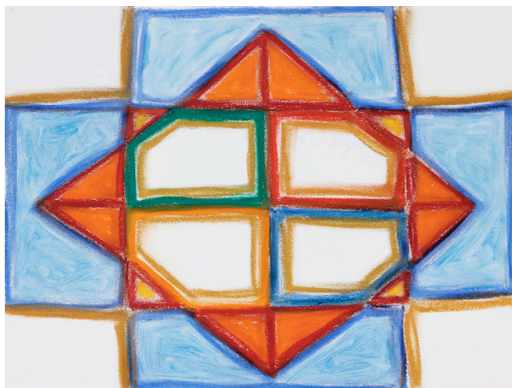
**Yau, John. “Harriet Korman’s Chromatic and Linear Improvisations”, Hyperallergic, September 21, 2014.**

<http://hyperallergic.com/150159/harriet-kormans-chromatic-and-linear-improvisations/>

**HYPERALLERGIC**  
Sensitive to Art & its Discontents  
GALLERIES • WEEKEND

## Harriet Korman’s Chromatic and Linear Improvisations

by John Yau on September 21, 2014



Untitled, 2012, 15 x 20”, oilstick on paper

The key to Harriet Korman’s work is drawing. However, until this exhibition, *Harriet Korman: Line or Edge, Line or Color, New Paintings and Drawings*, at Lennon, Weinberg (September 18–November 1, 2014) she has tended to show only a few drawings at a time. In this exhibition of twenty-one works, there are ten drawings done in oil stick on paper and eleven oil paintings. The drawings simultaneously stand alone and function as an outline for her paintings, providing a structure that enables her to improvise with her choice of colors. Her palette, which consists largely of vibrant primaries and secondaries set off against browns, ochers and dark violets, also contains some quirky colors, including different intensities of lime green.

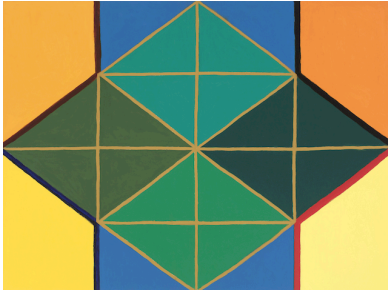
Korman’s hints at whimsy and disruptions of symmetry and pattern instill a remarkable freshness in her work. For the past two decades, she has divided the surface into a non-hierarchical, interlocking combination of geometric areas, which can be separated by line or abutted, edge to edge. In some cases, the line or lines a geometric shape seem to spread the color beyond its boundaries, echoing the effect of halation. But, as one learns from looking at Korman’s work, every pattern, repetition or trajectory – all the traps that lull viewers

into relaxing their attention, thinking they know what will happen next – will be disrupted as the artist introduces an unexpected shift or change into the work. Such looking requires that the viewer remained focused and alert – it is a way of thinking about painting that seems almost extinct.



Untitled, 2012, 18 x 24”, oilstick on paper

At the same time, Korman is not one of those artists who claims to be carrying the torch for painting. It is refreshing to experience work that doesn’t rely on the WOW factor; doesn’t exhibit nostalgia for Abstract-Expressionism; and doesn’t require that things be attached to the surface. Nor does it depend on non-art or distressed supports; it doesn’t celebrate materialist or fetishize materialist excess; it isn’t made of images, appropriated or otherwise, and it has never played the bigger-is-better game. Her



Untitled, 2013, 30 x 40", oil on canvas

geometric shapes include wedges, diamonds, triangles and rectangles – nothing eccentric. Add to this language a vocabulary of lines of varying widths and you pretty much have an idea of what she works with.

Korman's approach brings to mind John Ashbery's description of James Bishop, another wonderful painter: "the stripping down is obviously a decision of the heart, not the head." Although I have no proof of this, I feel that Korman, who began exhibiting in 1971, internalized, brewed and melded together aspects of Minimalism, Op Art and Concrete Art, which includes the work of Max Bill and Richard Paul Lhose, engendering a kind of work that was identifiably hers from the outset. She was indifferent to

Pop Art, mass media and cultural reference.

For this exhibition, Korman often combines two different structures, a diamond and a cruciform, each of which she divides further. All the paintings and drawings are untitled, as she does not want to suggest any connection to a real life counterpart. She isn't painting something; she is making a painting, which in her case often means improvising upon a drawing.



Untitled, 2013, 30 x 40", oil on canvas

A painting from 2013, which measures 30 x 40 inches, initially seems to be balanced in terms of color, particularly since all of shapes mirror their counterparts on the other side of the canvas. However, if you are looking at the vertical axis she has drawn from the painting's top edge to the bottom one, it slowly becomes apparent that the two yellows, oranges and olive greens are not the same from one side to another. The adjacent colors submerge but do not hide this fact. Once you make this distinction, you begin making others.

In another painting, where the shapes are abutted, she rotates and enlarges a form so that it suggests receding plane, introducing an illusionistic note into an otherwise flat composition. What's marvelous about these disruptions is that they intensify the logic of the painting, as well they remind us that each formal element (color, line and shape) represents a choice, that nothing is foreordained.

The oil stick drawings are an exhibition unto themselves. One can almost detect a chronology, which starts with the artist using a dark green oil stick to evenly divide a rectangle into four sections, then filling them in with red, blue, mustard yellow or lime green. After that, she introduces a diamond and cruciform shape, which she further divides them.



Untitled, 2013, 30 x 40", oil on canvas

Korman's divisions and improvisations bear affinities with the music of Phil Glass, Steve Reich and Terry Riley. Her color shapes and lines are visual intervals defining a rectangle or field, forming clusters that go from short to long, dissolve and reconfigure. It is not the repetition that the viewer finds entrancing, but the subtle shifts and unexpected jumps, all held tightly in place by the hybrid structure, which often combines a cruciform and diamond.

Korman's paintings and drawings might look simple, but they are not.

There is a quietly brilliant flair to this work, which never tries to be overtly dramatic or make a large claim. To my mind, they don't have to. There is something so solid and satisfying to these paintings and drawings that I only wish that she will soon get the museum show that she has long deserved.

*Harriet Korman: Line or Edge, Line or Color, New Paintings and Drawings continues at Lennon, Weinberg Inc. (514 West 25th Street, Chelsea, Manhattan) through November 1.*

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## Harriet Korman

Nathanson, Jill. "Jewel-Pure Color: Harriet Korman at Lennon, Weinberg" *Artcritical*, October 31, 2014.

<http://www.artcritical.com/2014/10/31/jill-nathanson-on-harriet-korman/>

**artcritical**

the online magazine of art and ideas

## Jewel-Pure Color: Harriet Korman at Lennon, Weinberg

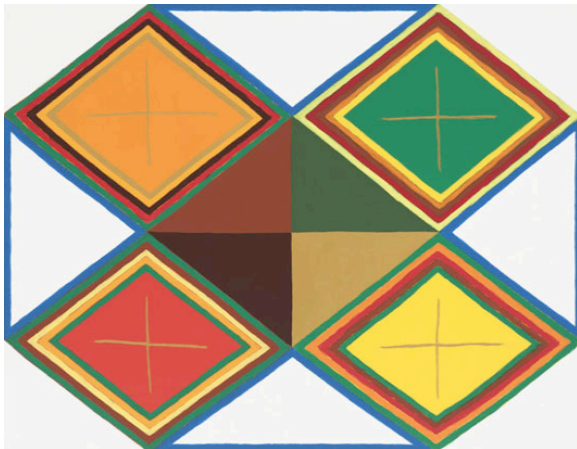
by Jill Nathanson

*Harriet Korman: Line or Edge, Line or Color* at Lennon Weinberg

September 18 to November 1, 2014

514 West 25th Street, between 10th and 11th avenues

New York City, 212 941 0012



Rigorous, flat, unpredictable, startling, deadpan, funny. These are all descriptions that can apply to Harriet Korman's paintings. Among painters, she is esteemed for integrating in her abstract work a wide range of qualities from the clumsy and odd to the most gracious unities of jewel-pure color. Her first exhibition since winning a Guggenheim fellowship in 2013, composed of works from the past three years, feels like an exuberant engagement with the animating aspects of her work from the past two decades.

Essentially a suite of themes and variations, this exhibition of 10 drawings made with oil stick and 10 paintings are meditations on painting's potential for unexpected encounter. They certainly compel and reward a meditative look.

The works avoid assuming any sort of posture — high-tech, ironic, romantic, or post-this or that — drawing upon honest studio experimentation. Colors, in their variety, combinations and sequences, reference lived experiences from garishness to mysticism, and it is this range that is key to their depth of feeling.

Most of the works on display differ from the output of Korman's last few shows in that they include areas of plain white paint, as well as hand-painted linear elements. In the previous two shows, Korman's paintings were constructed exclusively of highly saturated color areas. The colored lines in the new work let Korman respond to the optical activity at the edges of adjacent hues. Drawn lines and clusters of colored outlines are used to orchestrate color vibrations where areas of color meet.

Entering into the simple composition of each work it is possible to become engaged in contemplating mandala-like geometries. *Untitled* (2014) is symmetrical in layout but not in the weight of its colors. The central diamond creates a restrained color hum, while the surrounding four diamonds advance and expand. Some white areas are under pressure, while the corners are open. Many kinds of edge co-exist.





The new paintings originate in corresponding drawings. One can study ideas as they transform from the very personal oil stick works to the more austere, painted realizations, noting that they do so without loss of intimacy or immediacy. (The drawings are also beautiful on their own.) Compositions are built on simple layouts — diamonds intersecting cruciform shapes — but it is the complicating of these geometries through color that make the paintings happen. Color skews the symmetry of the layouts and sparks a dynamic, optical experience that takes us to a more complex, active order.

In this visual process, questions arise: how do those varieties of green differ? How are those glowing contrasts on one side of the painting offset the other? Are those oranges all the same or subtly different, and if so, and why? Structure is established, then repeatedly contravened by color, the visual impact of specific hues creating tension and imbalance. As we gaze, geometric configurations give way to sequences of extraordinary color, radiating, playing hopscotch, building glow upon glow.