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Harriet Korman

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ART IN REVIEW

Harriet Korman

*Lennon, Weinberg
560 Broadway, at Prince Street
SoHo
Through March 17*

In her beautiful new paintings, it looks as if Harriet Korman has achieved a harmonic convergence of all her painterly energies. She has been a serious and respected practitioner of Modernist grid-based abstraction for a long time, but her work has never seemed so effortlessly sure of itself, so decisively clear yet playfully free.

Each squarish medium-size canvas offers a flat, thinly but sensuously painted patchwork of richly hued interlocking shapes: trapezoids, triangles and parallelograms as well as ellipses, pie shapes, half-moons and biomorphic blobs. Ms. Korman starts, presumably, by improvising loosely gridded and swooping lines and then fills in the interstices with luscious colors ranging from bright and fruity to dark and chocolatey. She arrives at loopy harlequin fields in which small shapes seem to coalesce into larger forms and then break apart to reform into different configurations.

The paintings constantly oscillate between wholeness and fragmentation. Echoes of Klee, Miró, Kandinsky and Mondrian, as well as more exotic sources like Tantric art, add historical resonance, but not to stuffy or cleverly retro effect. Ms. Korman's paintings have their own fresh, contemporary feel. To sit and gaze at them is to remember that one of art's purposes — and not the least one — is visual pleasure.

KEN JOHNSON