


 Art

 DAVID BONETTI
**GALLERY
 WATCH**
**Driven
 to dynamic
 abstraction**

AFTER LYING low for a couple of decades, abstraction has re-emerged as the most dynamic and satisfying mode of contemporary painting. Of course, coming after years of art steeped in irony and appropriation, much of today's abstraction is different from the utopian and heroic models that defined the 20th century's first 75 years. Resisting the arts of mechanical reproduction that dominate contemporary image making, abstract painting today is nonetheless informed by them.

Four San Francisco galleries are featuring group shows of abstract painting. Altogether some 40 artists from both coasts and various parts in between are on view.

With "New Work: Abstract Painting," the **Hosfelt Gallery**, 430 Clementina St., is covering the field. Showcasing 18 artists, chosen by gallery associate Diane Hoover, the survey continues through Feb. 19.

The range here extends from the dense decorative fields of local painter **Reed Danziger** to two fascinating media-based pieces, by Bay Area artist **Jim Campbell** and New Yorkers **Janine Cirincione**+**Michael Ferraro**, that show how painting has affected the look of art generated by computers.

Lowan **John Andrews'** labor-intensive works make no reference to anything outside themselves. His works feature layers of wax and pigment applied to aluminum

squares covered with dense grids of tiny pinpricks. The result is subtle washes of color — a blue-green contrasting with pink and a yellow-green contrasting with orange in the two works here — appearing to be captured somewhere within the waxy medium.

Susie Rosmarin's finely crafted "Blue Flash" is an op-art flashback, specifically to Victor Vasarely. (Both color field painting and photorealism, two movements that crashed in the '70s, have been undergoing a revival, but I doubt that we're yet ready for a fresh look at op art.)

Other well-crafted works are more original. New Yorker **William Wood** has made two gray oil-and-wax abstractions that feature all-over compositions based on contrasts between dark and light tones, a no-no to formalist critic **Clement Greenberg**, but few today pay attention to his prescriptions for great painting.

Fellow New Yorker **Donald Moffett** has made a small vertical painting in which he applied thick strands of paint at a 90-degree angle to the support rather than

flat upon it. In the center of the richly textured work — did he use cake-decorating tools? — runs a line like one of Barnett Newman's zips that divides the piece vertically between two tones of gun-metal gray. (Ask the gallery to show another Moffett that looks like dense swags made of Cheez Whiz.)

Even more radical painting de-constructions are found in **Fabian Marcaccio's** "Paintants," a piece that is perhaps too hysterical for its small size, and **Diana Cooper's** "painting" made from bits of colored pipe cleaners, foil and clear plastic as well as more usual materials extends beyond its bounds onto the gallery wall.

A highlight of the engaging show is Texas-based **Aaron Parazette's** "Spree Lite," a dynamic composition that looks like a paint-overflow in a cartoon factory — long, luscious rivulets of color flow within rigidly defined boundaries down its surface.

In "Live From New York," the **Haines Gallery**, 49 Geary St., aimed to show a group of "emerging and mid-career New Yorkers who

have rarely, if ever, been exhibited on the West Coast" — but almost all the work in it, which continues through Feb. 19, is abstract.

And **Jonathan Seliger's** sculptures and **Gary Gissler's** paintings are strongly dependent on ideas associated with abstraction.

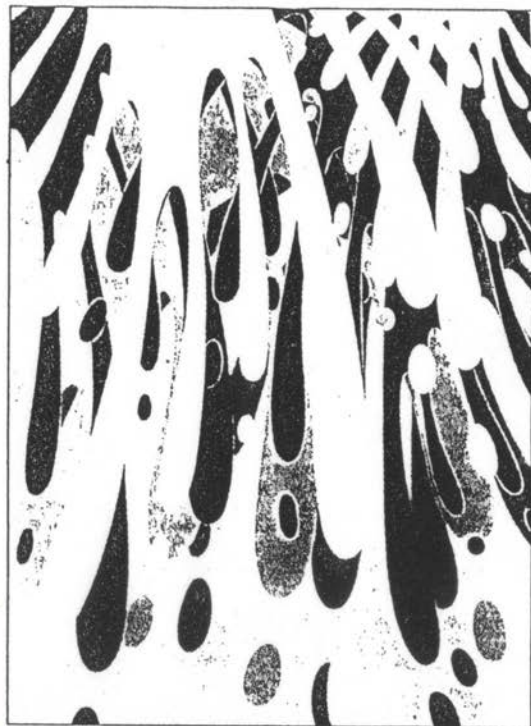
Seliger makes work in the rich conceptual art continuum book-ended by Marcel Duchamp and Robert Gober. He selects commercially manufactured objects, remakes them by hand and then re-presents them as art objects. His triangular Priority Mail tube set on its end and titled "After Brancusi" is intellectually attractive, although it didn't much remind me of Brancusi. Gissler's white-gesso paint surfaces are marked by meaningless phrases written so small that they pass easily into the realm of abstraction, although the fun is trying to read them.

In her two glossy works on canvas, **Karen Arm** explores the decorative possibilities suggested by formica, and **James Siena** appropriates the look of computer boards for decorative purposes.

Both **Sharon Loudon** and **Polly Apfelbaum** update earlier practices. Loudon isolates tight little clusters of marks on large white sheets of paper, deconstructing gestural abstraction in a way similar to David Reed. Apfelbaum stains velvet pods in a manner derived from color field painting but scatters them on the floor like the scatter pieces that shared space with color field painting in New York galleries in the '70s.

Steven Charles's dense works exemplify a sort of *horror vacui* that artists fueled by speed made in the late '60s. Composed of stripes and dots, and patterns reminiscent of circuits and channels, and riotously colored, Charles' works look like aerial maps of futuristic cities. (Think "Blade Runner.") **Maureen McQuillan's** more subdued work also has a topographical reference, but her gently undulating parallel lines seem to map out the rolling hills of Ohio rather than the L.A. of the future.

In "Cool Painting," **Brian Gross Fine Art**, 49 Geary St., features (through Feb. 26) the school of



Cartoon colors: Aaron Parazette's "Spree Lite" is a highlight of the "New Work: Abstract Painting" exhibit at Hosfelt Gallery.

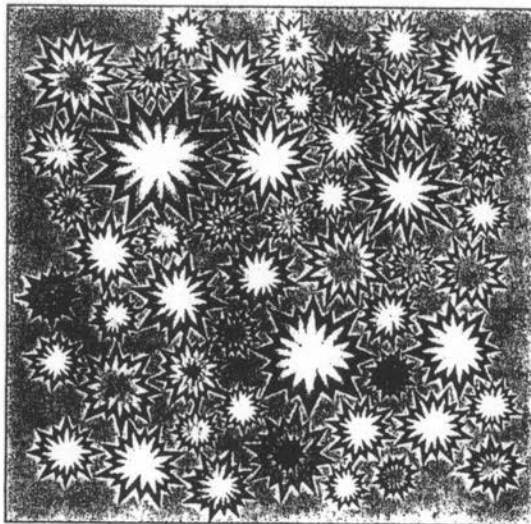
new abstraction that is based in commercial products. The look is slick as a surf board, bright as a Ford Mustang and cheery as a smiley face. The moment the future became the present — in the suburban American home of the '70s — is the inspiration.

Jason Eoff's two large canvases each feature multicolored and layered sunbursts that appear to be applied to their slick surfaces like decals. The colors of both grounds — an avocado green and a chocolaty brown — are derived from the coordinated tones of '70s kitchens. Have a nice day.

While Eoff takes on the modern kitchen, **Terri Friedman** seeks her inspiration in the bathroom. On three or four layers of shower-

curtainlike acetate, she paints bright circles that look like squashed jelly fish. Suspended one in front of the other, the sheets create a three-dimensional painting.

"2000," the exhibition at the **Patricia Sweetow Gallery**, 49 Geary St., through Saturday, couldn't be more different. Announced as "a group exhibition for the first month of the millennium," it features the radical reductionists of the new abstraction, those who make painting that tends toward monochromism and minimal revelation of process or personality. With work by **Joseph Marioni** and **Peter Tollens** among others, it is an exhibition that tests one's own ability to see.



Commercial appeal: Jason Eoff's "Be Bright, Be Bright" is one of two large canvases he is showing at Brian Gross Fine Art.