

thread. Less symbolically, the observer, watching the viewer proceed on the stage. Perhaps a reference to the impassive spectator detachedly noting the fall of a guillotine. But to return to the maze. A confrontation? The choice is left open. One can walk around, outside, peering into the cage. Or one can enter, treading along the narrow corridors, looking out through the fences of barbed wire. The sense of a concentration camp? Yet somewhere the potential immediacy of experience dissipates. Is it that I am nowhere really trapped, lost in the tangle of an encroaching web? The correct passage out always safely in sight. I try to pretend. Does the sheen of the small-holed hardware cloth mute the potent connotation of the barbed barriers? Associations to porch screening, familiar enclosures. Or is it the almost glossy newness of the wire itself which neutralizes its danger? And the noise. A drumlike rhythm. The sounds of drama. I hear a movie-track of thumping heartbeats, jungle dances. A parody of my position. But in a way maybe this does heighten my awareness of my presence as situated. I sense myself playing a part. Contrived in the piece. Not so much a participant involved in an event, more an accomplice agreeing to manipulation by the script.

What is striking about JUDY RIFKA's paintings is their appearance as collages. Collages of paint. The surfaces are plywood, assertively there. Attached (to, on) — layers of paint building into a tangible thickness. The pigment doubling, crisscrossing on top of itself into an envelope of color. A material shape appended, as if glued, on the surface. In the series of matte black paintings, for example, two separate pieces seem to overlap, one superimposed on the other, their edges intersecting to outline a single form. Yet throughout the black is the same color. It is the drawing of the paint, the lines articulated by its varying density, that defines the interior shapes and thus substantiates the optical effect of depth. Internal rectangular patches of paint emphatically demarcate the corner of the creases. A suggestion that the shape is arrived at by a systematic process of folding. But is this a paraphrase? A painting that makes itself. And is Rifka's involvement with materiality just another demonstration of the physical basis for the construction of an artwork? Perhaps an indication can be found in the two pieces shown in a Bykert group show. Here both support and image build together. Paper cards with sections of red

paint add one next to another, in uneven columns, to accumulate a defined red figure on an irregular field. The shape of the image seemingly a priori and yet always contingent on the alignment of the segments of its origins. And I wonder whether the issue of the actual structure of making is still a question. Or whether it has become accepted as statement.

ALIGHIERO BOETTI's work leaves me puzzled. Is he deliberately mocking the notion of art as a solution to a problem? Is his use of a series taken through various permutations an indictment of the repetition of art production, varying the terms without changing the theme? Or, is he questioning judgments of quality, of one answer being more valid than another? His drawings are all on graph paper — as if to emphasize their grounding in mathematical truth. One group involves the filling in of a set number of consecutive squares, the set number of times, each pattern being different. Seven sevens, nine nines, etc., the most being 119 119s. Would an arrangement other than that given be any more right, any better in its solution of the task? And once one has completed seven sevens, why continue to nine nines? Is it just an excuse for making another image? Or, is it an investigation of what happens as more and more squares are filled up until finally the rules of procedure can no longer be followed? A similar series uses subtraction. Four differences of fours, four paired motifs, in each one hieroglyph four squares less than the other. Is this a problem? Or, is it a demonstration of what one can do? A kind of game for which one might imagine an infinity of variations? Two other drawings are entitled *Squaring a Thousand*. In one ten large (32 x 32 unit) squares contain different fillings in (subtractions) of 24 units, leaving 1000. In the other varying configurations of 39 outlines units are added to each of the five (31 x 31 unit) squares to yield 1000. But what is the purpose of all this? Is it simply an illustration of how art is nothing but a game of contriving a procedure and then filling in with answers, one no better than the other? And if this is so, doesn't the work fall into its own trap?

Similar questions arise with LAURACE JAMES's sculpture. Her constructions are made of wood, some surfaces painted, others left raw. Each is accompanied by a set of instructions explaining how the viewer can manipulate the piece. Moving the hinged joints, reattaching hooks