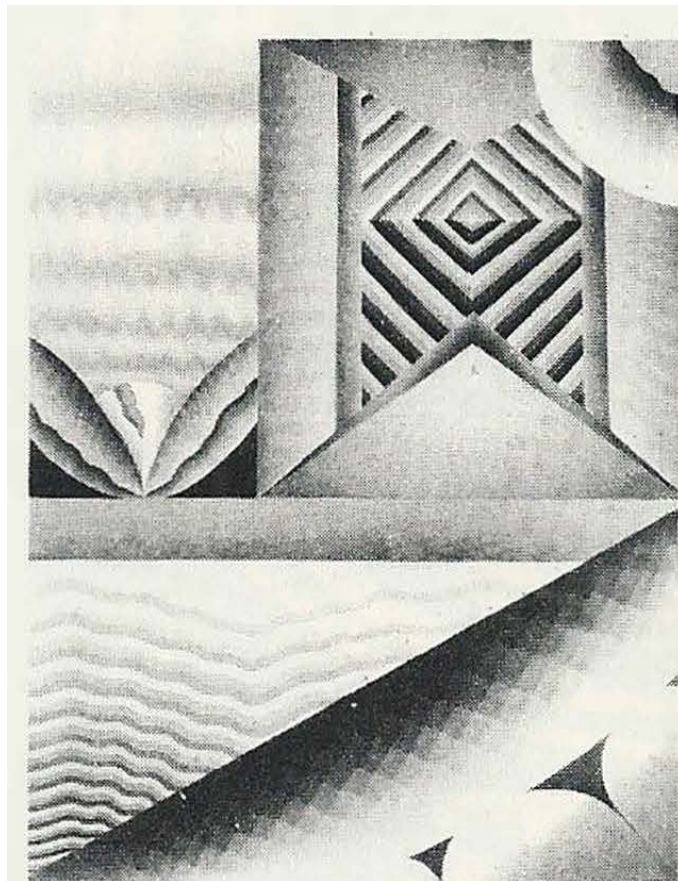


Art in America

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Evelyn Statsinger at Artemisia



Evelyn Statsinger: *Sections of Change*, 1978, oil on canvas, 40 by 32 inches; at Artemisia

Fantasy images, spatial ambiguity and pattern-hallmarks of Evelyn Statsinger's work for 30 years-look quite different now than they did in the 6-by-5-foot pen-and-ink drawings that startled people in the late '40s with their size and imagery, yet her subject matter and forms have changed less than one might think. Abstract contemplative paintings on canvas, done in the soft reds and greens of early Japanese Ukiyo-e prints, replace those lively figurative creatures of the imagination that earlier patterned her paper like blackwork embroidery.

Although fabric-like patterned areas persist in compartments of these new paintings, such areas no longer lie flat on the canvas or paper but bend to form illusionistic solids or melt into vast space. With her retreat from figuration, Statsinger has increased the ambiguity between figure and ground to

suggest the Surreal. Yet in both her old and her new work, near and far co-exist so closely that they leave the viewer uneasily wondering whether he is looking through a microscope or the wrong end of binoculars.

In transitional paintings included in this exhibition of six years' work, dark outlines define recognizable, though strange, objects against vaporous backgrounds; these works recall not only Statsinger's '60s paintings but her openness to Japanese art and philosophy and her

friendship with many Chicago Imagists. Scientific references abound in her work. from the details and images of the earliest drawings to the technical perfection of her newest paintings, which mimic Scientific American covers. In Statsinger's paintings her intellect and her private fantasy intertwine like yin and yang. In the recent abstract works, one senses that real objects like flowers or sexual microorganisms might grow from the geometric shapes In her earlier figurative paintings, objects did in fact have strange growths, textures and colors; they suggested creatures that live only in dreams. If both science and Japanese thought have influenced Statsinger, that duality can not be easily reconciled in life, nor is it easily united in her paintings.

- Holliday T. Day