



Cheryl Goldsleger, *Stations*, 1984, oil, wax, and graphite on linen, 25 x 46".

**CHERYL GOLDSLEGER, Bertha Urdang Gallery; "Alvar Aalto: Furniture and Glass," Museum of Modern Art:**

#### CHERYL GOLDSLEGER

The elaboration of visionary spaces has fascinated artists for centuries. Most imagined spaces convey a strong allegiance to romanticism—somehow, what is not real is presumed to be broodingly romantic; Cheryl Goldsleger's drawings and paintings perpetuate this tradition, but with a slightly revised interpretation of the fanciful. Nothing about her work is real, yet nothing is romantic either. These carefully constructed, ambiguous drawings and paintings are calculated investigations which seek comprehension in dreamlike and obscure landscapes of interior and exterior space.

Goldsleger starts by laying a checkerboard grid diagonally across the paper. This grid is engagingly obscure: it can be read as flat intersections of diagonal marks, or as a three-dimensional representation that recedes in space. It is a matrix from which rooms, spaces, and buildings emerge and evolve, sometimes seeming to occupy the same space simultaneously. In some drawings Goldsleger maintains one perspective, while in others she introduces multiple vanishing points. Everywhere, stillness is broken up by the suggestion of movement and the passage of time: the spaces are delineated with architectural, straight-edge precision, but Goldsleger defiles that lucidity with an overlay of texture and racing lines. This gives her inventions a metaphysical complexity, for each resolution generates another question.

Goldsleger lends us one persistent clue in all of her work: she loosely sketches chairs throughout these drawings, establishing a scale, a passing sensation of orientation, and a suggestion of memory and projection. Where there are chairs there must be floors. Where there are chairs there once were people. Goldsleger seems intuitively to know what it means to find an object in an empty space. Her scrawled chairs make the viewer feel the confusion of being at once an outsider, a voyeur, and a participant in some peculiar moment. Like Piranesi, Goldsleger understands that to place a person in an imagined setting is to diminish both the context and the human being; an artifact is infinitely more communicative.

Goldsleger begins with an academic premise about space and multiplicity and then inserts a psychological dimension. In the paintings, she layers pigment and wax to build up a white surface and then scratches away to reveal brown, black, and red lines. The directness of the drawings is more convincing; they are light and less labored, and the mystery is on the paper surface and does not have to be painstakingly retrieved.

Goldsleger is not interested in melodrama, but she does suggest that architecture as space offers an important resource for the investigation of perception and experience. Her visionary worlds lack any signature of architecture—the spaces are anonymous, and default style—yet somehow, in these characterless spaces, the psychological

force of architecture is keenly felt. Goldsleger's contained and disciplined approach may lead to new vistas and possibilities, or to myopic obscurity. One hopes that she has the wisdom to employ other strategies should her set of rules prove too constricting.

—PATRICIA C. PHILLIPS