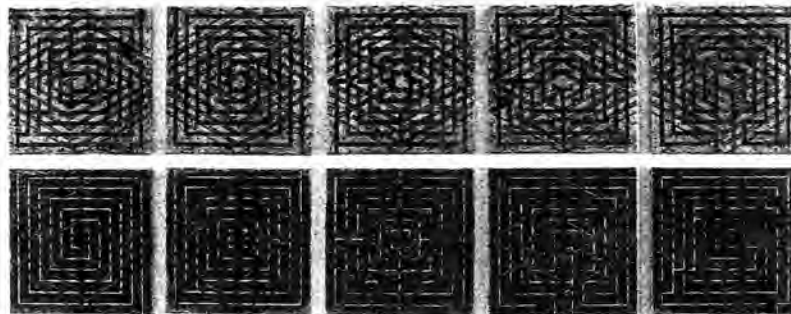


Art in America

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REVIEW OF EXHIBITIONS



Cheryl Goldsleger: *Sequence*, 1998, wax, oil, pigment on linen, 10 panels, 42 by 108 inches; at Rosenberg + Kaufman

Cheryl Goldsleger at Rosenberg + Kaufman

A generation ago, a varied group of artists, including Alice Aycock, Richard Fleischner and Robert Morris, looked to the convoluted geometry and mythological associations of the labyrinth for an alternative to what they perceived to be the narrow, Platonic limits of Minimalist form. Today, Georgia-based artist Cheryl Goldsleger likewise enlists the thematic and associative complexities of the labyrinth in encaustic paintings on linen and paper. Long fascinated by architectural forms, she exploits the deeply allusive quality of the maze in compositions whose elements double and mirror themselves in complex and rigorous permutations.

The large square *Encompass* (1999) exemplifies Goldsleger's elaborate and expert use of encaustic. Exploiting the medium's translucency, she began with a pair of superimposed grids - a simple graph and a system of orthogonals - rendered in graphite directly on linen. Two applications of clear hot wax followed, into which Goldsleger inscribed concentric circles, stairways and a rectangular form, scraping black oil into the incised outlines to enhance their definition. Between these two layers she sandwiched a painted stratum, buttery strokes of cool whitish-gray oil in cold wax medium. Goldsleger is devoted to a narrow range of grays, browns and blacks whose neutrality

lines. This tonal restraint also contributes to the antique look of the works, whose distressed and pocked surfaces appear to have weathered over time.

The light-hued *Encompass* has a dark counterpart in *Overview* (1998), another satisfying painting. We seem to look down on the plan of a stadium with tiered seats linked by stairways, beneath which lurk shadowy corridors. Again we find a play of translucent layers and a contrast between right-angle and curving geometries, but here shaded in dark tones that can be read as coloristic ciphers for mystery and age.

Such suggestively "archeological" paintings were accompanied in the exhibition by a number of somewhat drier works that examine the maze as a formal figure. *Investigation* (1998) literally sets the pattern, with a single labyrinth superimposed in plan and isometric projection. The 10-canvas *Sequence* (1998) pushes this logic further, repeating forms in positive and negative, plan and projection. But, emptied of its allusive richness, the labyrinth becomes just another abstract figure the geometric rigidity of these designs doesn't invite absorption as does, say, a Celtic interlace. Goldsleger's work is at its best when she imbues the geometry with a sense of both visual possibility and the passage of time.

-Tom McDonough