

CRITICISM REVIEWS



of Genji V, 1998, 48-color woodcut on rust TGL 7 inches (106.7 x 119.4cm). Copyright Helen Frankenthaler. Printed and published by Tyler Graphics Ltd., London. Photograph: Courtesy of Bobbie Greenfield

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of the Genji tale that suddenly announces Genji's death and then moves on to describe the courtly activities that unfold in the wake of his expiration. While Frankenthaler's *Genji-V* forgoes conventional figurative details, it does capture the story's emotional essence, creating cadences of rhythm and rest that whisper of an ever shifting and changing world. Additionally, while in traditional works the *Genji* image—text relationships are usually closely allied, in Frankenthaler's prints their interrelation is much more diffuse. While her titles suggest *Genji* story plot points, the images ultimately explore more personal vistas. Thoroughly modern and

individual in their thrust, her *Genji* series draws energy and focus from the Japanese precedences, but transforms their motifs into highly personal expressions. Affirming the continued significance of a 10th century legend nearly 1,000 years later, Frankenthaler's *Genji* prints express the contemporary relevance of the timeless themes of life's loves, longings, and lamentations.

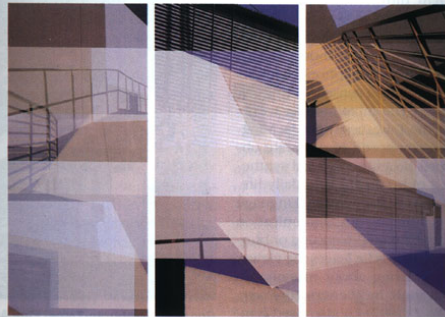
Collette Chattopadhyay



Jenny Okun at the Craig Krull Gallery

Jenny Okun's works extend a youthful, exuberant mood. Rather than extending traditional photography's search for the perfect moment or shot, this European-American photographer accentuates the processes of searching for images as more significant than any single triumphal picture. Racketing her film while it is still in the camera, Okun creates multiple exposures on film that she later digitally manipulates. Presenting collage-like compositions, her works play light passages against dark, while spinning grid axes into circling matrixes that transform the solidity of stone, steel, and glass into cubist visions of translucency and space.

This recent exhibition presented 15 new photographic iris prints. Included



Jenny Okun, Bergamot White Triptych, 1997, iris print. 22 x 31 inches.

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were images shot on commission for the new Getty Center in Los Angeles, as well as photo-collages of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Cite de la Musique in Paris, the Gough Clock in London, the Predock Library in Las Vegas, and the ancient Native-American ruin known as Mesa Verde in Arizona. Predominately boldly colored and fast-paced, these works evoke the clipped pace of city environments.

The earliest work in the show, however, entitled *Mesa Verde Triptych* (1995), established a much slower and more subtle visual cadence. At first glimpse it appeared to be a sun-faded sepia print, structured with deliberately balanced horizontal and vertical axes. But with time, the work's delicate analogous color scheme emerged, playing muted beiges and pinks against bleached yellow and soft ochre hues. One of the most poetic works exhibited, the *Mesa Verde Triptych* was obviously a touchstone from which the subsequent works evolved.

One of the most striking later works is the *Getty Entrance Triptych* (1997), part of a suite of six exhibited prints of the Getty Center complex. Setting sweeping curvilinear lines against a structured vertical and horizontal matrix, this photograph is bolder in color tone and more structurally complex than the *Mesa Verde* print. Multiplying and refracting the skylight ceiling of the Museum's entrance pavilion, the photograph feted the building's grandness through the visual emphasis of repetition and multiplication.

While some have suggested that the faceted nature of Okun's works converse with Cubism, the tone and mood of these works are considerably more blithe. Certainly, replication and multiplication in these works carry a laudatory, rather than analytic, overtone. Indeed, except for their lightness, the works might be regarded as a witty secularization of ancient Buddhist imagery where refraction and multiplication often function as symbols of power



Romilla Batra, Countryside, 1996, porcelain

and magnificence. But, perhaps all such ruminations are simply too heavy for these impish works which—like a Disneyland roller-coaster ride—engage a giddy and exhilarated consciousness. Infusing Western Modernist photography and painting idioms with mass-media savvy and new technology investigations, Okun's works are in the final analysis playful, perceptive, and progressive.

Collette Chattopadhyay



San Francisco

Voices at Kalart Gallery

While the seven artists included in this group exhibition are all of Indian descent, the work presented didn't necessarily reflect a deliberately "South Asian" aesthetic and that, despite the show's decidedly ethnic focal point, proved to be its strength. Now that the chic of the late 1980s/early 1990s identity politics has faded, curators must be careful when bringing together artists because they share a certain genetic make-up; the success, as well as the failure of shows such as *Voices* present case studies in how to approach showcasing work by artists who hail from a particu-

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