

ART PICKS OF THE WEEK

LINES, HABIB
KHERADYAR

What with a recent show at Chac Mool and current ones at Christopher Grimes and Patricia Faure, among others, there seems to be a spike in interest in monochromatic painting. Maybe one-color canvases, the ultimate abstraction, provide a contemplative nonspace into which we can perceptually disappear, away from the storm and stress of post-contemporary life. Or, conversely, the intricacies of the early 21st century may have sensitized us to the nearly invisible layers of meaning and experience in what would otherwise seem panels of flat paint, overgrown color chips. Then again, how subtle do these nuances need to be? A one-color field can be scored with several lines, or whole networks of them, and still stimulate unusual attention, even mantric concentration. Agnes Martin's work is *the* case in point, her finely described grids and parallels floating almost invisibly in ethers of raw material. Materfamilias among the half-dozen artists in "Lines," Martin contributes two small exquisite works on paper that are surrounded by similarly small-voiced, large-spirited paintings and drawings. Max Cole's series of small acrylics, compulsively scored with her tiny black marks, may be the show's experiential nucleus, but Lies Kraal's gently indented monochrome paintings and incised squares of paperborne acrylic, Mieke Gelley's milky washes (in which "line" per se is a loose function of hand-wielded paintbrush), and the infinite depths Carol Kaufman realizes by covering every millimeter with uni-ball pen ink each demand their own meditative visit. Penelope Krebs' bright-hued little parade of vertical stripes seems like the odd woman out here, but for all its apparent comic relief, it, too, keeps us in the realm of the transportive absolute.

With their sweet colors, vibrant moiré patterns, and protruding wires describing eccentric low-reliefs, Habib Kheradyar's "fabric and armature paintings" — arguably part of the one-color discourse — may strike one as rather garish. But they seem frivolous only relative to the austere, mostly monochrome work just described; once Kheradyar's constructions lure in the eye with their sensuous charms and hypnotic buzz, the same sense of repose sets in. The universe again reveals itself in these grains of art — especially in the smaller pieces, which hover almost disembodied on the wall.

"Lines" at Hunsaker/Schlesinger, 2525 Michigan Ave., T3, Santa Monica. (310) 828-1133. Habib Kheradyar at Miller Durazo, 8720½ W. Pico Blvd. (310) 652-0057. Both thru Feb. 15.

—Peter Frank