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Pat Lipsky

Elizabeth Harris Gallery
529 West 20th Street, Chelsea
Through April 12

L.I.C.K. LTD
46-44 11th Street
Long Island City, Queens
Through April 17

Pat Lipsky, who has been exhibiting regularly in New York since 1970, makes flat, geometric paintings without irony. That they come off not stale or stuffy is a notable accomplishment at this late date in Modernist art history. Her paintings hark back to the early 1960's, invoking the implacable non-representational frontality of Frank Stella's stripe painting. Unlike Mr. Stella, however, Ms. Lipsky keeps her compositions tightly contained within the traditional pictorial rectangle and gives them seductive, egg-shell surfaces.

The pictures are deceptively plain-spoken. Vertical bands of equal width fill the canvases edge to edge, each band divided into two blocks, one above and one below. The effect is polyrhythmic in three dimensions: the bands seem to push up and down like valves in a machine while the blocks of subtly variable color, alternating warm-cool or dark-light, pulse toward and away from the viewer. Those that combine slightly shifting blacks with glowing, richly saturated blues or reds are especially captivating; with delicate matte surfaces of home-made paint, they call to mind Ad Reinhardt's paintings.

Ms. Lipsky's compositions distantly resemble piano keyboards, enhancing the feeling of Bach-like musicality. The more you gaze at them, the more absorbing they become.

KEN JOHNSON