

BARBARA TAKENAGA *New Paintings*

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In 2009, Barbara Takenaga exhibited *Langwidere* (2009) at DC Moore, a series in which she challenged herself to paint the same painting 30 times. Each work was 12 by 10 inches, and started with a small circle, which became the origin of a widening spiral of variously-sized circles. Takenaga's approach has always been incremental, with one similar, often circular form generating another, like cells undergoing meiosis. As much as I admired the self-abnegating challenge that the artist had undertaken in *Langwidere*, I also felt it was one that she should not repeat, that the structuring device of a mandala-like swirl of circles might have run its course and even may have become a burden on the artist's inventiveness.

Given my growing peevishness over the mandala-like form, Takenaga's exhibition was a discovery. Gone are the centering forms, which, I thought, gave the viewer too much to hold onto, basically conveying a sense of security and comfort. In these new paintings, Takenaga has relinquished some of the control, introducing overlays of disruptive elements into her strong desire for organization and reliability. It would seem that she has accepted that pandemonium and turmoil cannot be kept at bay, that they are every bit a part of the way time unfolds. In paintings such as "Red Echo" and "Midline" (both 2011), it is as if dissimilar systems (differently sized and colored bubble-like circles, swirls, torquing lines, and cloud- or tissue-like smudges of paint) are invading each other's territory. Dissonance undermines as well as threatens

