Review: Valerie Jaudon's paintings: The more you look, the more you're pulled into her world

By Christopher Knight, October 10, 2016

Valerie Jaudon, "Dialect," 2014, oil on linen. (Christopher Knight / Los Angeles Times)

Valerie Jaudon has been making Post-minimal abstractions for 40 years. Her elegant paintings are at once cerebral and a wild ride.

A dozen Pattern and Decoration paintings from the last three years at Von Lintel Gallery show her working at top form. They employ her familiar motif of wide but intricate two-dimensional interlaces painted in oil on linen. A seeming simplicity gets more complex the longer you look.

The New York artist lays out a byzantine linear design in pencil, then fills in the spaces with short, blunt, precise strokes of black or, more often, white paint. Painted areas balance unpainted ones. Basket-weave brush marks catch the light, adding unexpected visual chunkiness to the taut, flat plane of refined linen.

Her rhythmic interlaces are somewhere between elaborate calligraphy and simplified pictograms. They loop, zigzag and tumble across the plane, suggesting letters here, numbers there and stylized organic elements in between. Your eye can enter one side of a painting and follow the path uninterrupted over, under and around the entire surface, until finally exiting, exhausted but excited, on the other side.

Sometimes the asymmetrical pattern subdivides the rectilinear shape of the canvas into subsections of equal sizes — halves, quarters and more. The visual divisions create subliminal perceptions, such as open manuscript pages or an unfolded map.

Jaudon's paintings draw on a host of dazzling sources: Arabic writing, Mayan hieroglyphs, Japanese characters — even a kid's game of Chutes and Ladders. These she bends to Western traditions of formal abstraction. Suddenly, our vaunted modernity seems of a playful piece with ancient multicultural practices. It's a beautiful outcome.

http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-jaudon-von-lintel-20161010-snap-htmlstory.html