



Jill Moser Hilma 30x24 Flashe and acrylic on panel 2020

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## At the Galleries

By Karen Wilkin

At Bienvenu Steinberg & Partner, in Tribeca, Jill Moser showed recent abstract paintings that must have surprised admirers who hadn't been paying close attention. The works for which she is best known are drawing-like aggregations of energetic, layered lines, coiled into rounded shapes, in subdued, minimal hues. Last September, at Pamela Salisbury Gallery, in Hudson, New York, Moser showed new works startlingly unlike her linear paintings. The implied shapes of her previous images had become explicit, defined zones of radiant color. We sometimes recognized harmonies and rhythms related to earlier configurations, but it was the orchestration of full throttle hues that held us. Were these changes triggered by the isolation and stress of the previous 18 months or were they an inevitable development of the linear works' suggestions? Either way, the results were compelling.

Moser's new paintings develop all the implications of the lively works she showed last fall. Generous, mostly swelling shapes, in unmodulated, unnamable hues levitate, overlap, or delicately touch. Some expand across the field, while others taper, as if unable to escape the pull of the edge of the canvas. Without resembling anything specific, Moser's shapes have an appealing corporeal quality, definite personalities, and implied mobility. And while she first convinced us that she was a virtuoso of subdued nuance, she turns out to be an exuberant colorist, playing tender greens and bold blues against a spectrum of yellows, punctuated with occasional pinks or purples. Matte surfaces enhance the chromatic drama, with a faint echo of Renaissance fresco. I first preferred the exhibition's vertical rectangles because of the tension gained by the compression of the configurations, but I kept returning to a squarish horizontal, *Hilma* (2020), a bulging stack of orange, lemon, and celadon, seasoned with a little salmon pink, teetering on a suggested point. *Hilma* had been a star at Pamela Salisbury's but seemed even stronger at second meeting. Like all of Moser's most memorable works, *Hilma* was at once playful and profoundly serious. Moser's new paintings seem to me among her toughest and most personal to date. I look forward eagerly to seeing what happens next.