

The New York Times

Art: Pat Adams Paintings

By Hilton Kramer

Jan. 10, 1970

THERE are painters whose work shouts to us from the rooftops, never for a moment lowering its voice; and there are others whose work discloses itself with an air of intimacy and confidence. The paintings of Pat Adams, currently on view at the Za briskie Gallery, 699 Madison Avenue, are distinctly of the latter persuasion.

Miss Adams is an abstractionist of a somewhat mystical temperament. Her work is of a kind that suggests an abiding preoccupation with a world of spirit beyond the “merely” visible. Yet visually, her paintings abound in the most delicate, painstaking, exquisite images. She is a hedonist of shamelessly beautiful visual sensation, and her paintings—especially the large paintings that she is now showing for the first time—fill the eye with an almost hypnotic bath of completely delightful visual detail, with subtle color and vast spaces mingling in highly poetic combinations.

•

In most of these new pictures, the “field” of color is broken, mottled, and otherwise articulated by a free flowing design that some times resembles a breathtaking astronomical photograph of the heavens and some times bears an even closer resemblance to those old decorative Victorian end papers. Upon these eye beguiling fields of color and light, however, are placed symmetrical linear designs of a rigorous architectural form. This conjunction of “soft” sensation and “hard” structure is, indeed, the nexus of Miss Adams's poetic vision.

In the past, Miss Adams has always favored a very small format and the gouache medium, and in this exhibition there are many handsome examples of such work. But here for the first time she has also managed to sustain the poetry of her very individual imagery on a much larger scale. The air of intimacy and confidence remains intact, but the imagery supporting it now fills the eye with a more monumental dimension. All in all, the exhibition marks an important advance in this interesting artist's work.