

“George Peck | Sam Tchakalian: Susan Caldwell” by William Zimmer

Originally published in *Arts Magazine*, December 1977

Peck's monocolored shields bow out slightly from the wall, but the only markings of their surfaces is a pair of horizontal lines that parallel the straight edge of the floor and work visually to flatten out the curved surface. The effect is so discreet that the paintings might seem mere posing and solution to a formal problem, but for a brooding totemic quality that emanates from them. They recall the more highly calibrated curved paintings of Ron Gorchov...

Excerpt from *EBB TIDE: New York Chronicle* by Stuart Morgan

One attempt to change this system was a special exhibition organized by Michael Walls at Susan Caldwell called *In the Realm of the Monochromatic*. A large gallery full of monochrome paintings was off-putting; these works are notoriously uncommunicative. Their variety was not in doubt, from Marlene Lenkowsky's blue, triangular corner piece, an unimaginative stab at sculptural form, to George Peck's accomplished Tango Esmeraldo, a sheer, curved emerald surface with two horizontal lines. My difficulty lies in the term 'monochromatic itself. Walls said that he chose paintings "which present to the viewer one predominant color mood, aura or statement, even though the surface of the individual painting may be composed of two hues, or of a far greater number" This works for Milton Resnick's glutinous contribution, a dark greenish canvas which on closer inspection reveals white, red and orange additions, but fails in the case of Robert Mangold's large, characteristically im-perturbable diptych with one curved line, or Tony de Lap's puzzling construction, with its additional elements of incision and distance from the wall. How many issues can a monochromatic painting deal with and still remain Monochromatic?

NEW YORK LETTER by Carter Ratcliffe

Originally published in *Artscribe* No. 14 (October 1978)

In the Realm of the Monochromatic: 17 Painters- this formidably elegant show was put together at the Susan Caldwell Gallery by Michael Walls. "Monochrome"

designates a kind of painting that is interesting precisely because the term isn't accurate; in a variety of ways, each of the 17 painters represented here manages to get more than one color into his or her image. Milton Resnick's *Night* (1977) is a field of brown so churned up by the painter's brush that each touch reveals other hues, sometimes a richly smeared range of them. The brown of *Night* predominates, but only by virtue of accepting the presence of lesser light by virtue, that is, of giving itself the opportunity to predominate. Porfirio DiDonna's untitled painting of 1977 is a dark bluish-purple field inflected by textured patterns of the same color, and these patterns are, in turn, inflected by rows of dots in different colors. There are two blues in Gordon Hart's *Blue* (1977). In these and other instances, "monochrome" is a quality that appears as the painter follows a rule-of-one-color made at the outset. Patterns and textures in other colors are exceptions to the rule, but they aren't intended to prove anything. Rather, each exception clarifies a fundamental "monochrome". Each helps bring its field into focus. In the paintings of Edda Renouf, Marcia Haffif, George Peck, and others, there is only one hue. But each shows tonal variations. These are so various it's impossible to do justice to them in summer. It is possible, however, to raise a question: how much does tone have to do with a painter's definition of a color? The answer is different in different cases, which points to one of the exhibition's revelations: "monochrome" painting is not a style. Rather, it is a genre; the genre of nuance. Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism, late-Minimalist process painting, pattern painting, Los Angeles finish-fetishism- the artists in this show arrive from these stylistic origins and others. Yet, they are closer to one another than to the members of their original groupings.