

mentally painterly considerations of composition and methods of applying paint. The artists, Roy Dowell (who recently showed at LAICA,) hard-edge exponent June Harwood, Robin Mitchell (with works from the Baum Gallery), and newcomer Herb Rabbin, can be paired off visually. Mitchell and Rabbin seem most interested in extending vision horizontally or in lateral sequences of grouped panels. Dowell and Harwood both refer to collage, thus, segmented, cut-up compositions dominate. Both work in a tight, flat manner, Dowell rendering abstracted or simplified objects and color planes with naive matter-of-factness, Harwood reproducing accidental spilled-paint patterns while utilizing taped boundaries and uniformly even surfaces. Dowell's work recalls cubism of about 1920 as if interpreted by a primitive stylist. These small works are arbitrary, intense, and entirely serious. Although they are not easy to like, they have the grit to stay in the mind.

Mitchell's gouaches are multi-layered pattern fields in which a hail of personal energy and painterly activity melt into a color-field haze; sumptuous, worked-over pinks and plums predominate. Repetition achieves a resolved feeling of color and light, or an all-over atmosphere is broken down into layered, constituent hand-made marks.

Rabbin's longish horizontal panels reveal his interest in structured craftsmanship. He divides the format into a series of vertical rectangles of various widths, playing shapes against narrower bands. Each is treated to an opposition of black, greenish gray, or white in a strong graphic statement. They read as coded messages, progres-

sions, or as stages in contrary development, and indeed, they utilize the musical sonata form as a compositional source. The aspirations appear to be classic. One eye-catching feature is a textural stroke that looks as if it were squeegeed or sanded through layers of paint to expose unexpected depths.

Harwood's paintings dominate the show. Her large square formats (acrylic on canvas) stand out because explosive energies of movement, flowing blobs, and showering splatters overlay and move across the canvases in complex spatial interchanges. Another heightening effect is achieved through the intense chroma of offbeat, mixed colors set against stark white grounds.

Biology and geography are somehow alluded to and agitated by her orientation toward the repeated rhythms of dance. On the other hand, Harwood's compositions also freeze for our examination, then dazzle us with their fluctuation and oscillation in deep space. Her veteran's experience and picture-making maturity demonstrate with vigor what the other artists in the show have yet to achieve.

—Fidel Daniell
1982

June Harwood. *The Police*. 1980.
Acrylic. 54 x 54".



**"FOUR PAINTERS"
AT LOS ANGELES
VALLEY COLLEGE**
Van Nuys

One unintended virtue of this grouping is that while it showcases four very different talents, the similarities of the artists' work outnumber the differences. All work abstractly, and all are concerned with the funda-

JUNE HARWOOD at David Stuart

Los Angeles

June Harwood's painting of the last two years sums up the modernist journey, with emphasis on expressionist and formalist issues of recent decades. Traces of grids—sometimes shattered or exploded—attest to the geometric style from which her hard-edge approach emerged; they are newly invaded by brushstroke and gesture. Yet the new work is not a potpourri of styles but an integrated amalgamation, suggesting that the artist, like many others, is looking back to past traditions and integrating them with the present.

As abstraction, Harwood's painting is not without real-world references. Little airplane shapes on *Styx*, like Laurie Anderson's in her recent performance of *United States*, are open to interpretation. But as *actions* on the five-foot-square canvases, the shapes evoke Harold Rosenberg's 1950s concept of the canvas as the arena for the same. Simultaneously, this work recalls sixties interests. Squarish concentric demarcations that structure her vibrant energy bring to mind Michael Fried's contention of the need for reiteration of the canvas's edge; excursions into illusionistic depth notwithstanding, these demarcations also recall Clement Greenberg's famous essay on flatness and on the properties of pigment as the rationale for modernist painting. Hard-edge goes without saying, but these follow the thinking of the late Jules Langsner (to whom Harwood was married) rather than Lawrence Alloway's anti-geometric stance.

Harwood's basic format, tending to large or small X's slashed on inner squaring, is flexible and open to expression that may be rollicking in

one work, slowly waltzing in another. *Grateful Dead* (titles are only documentation, according to the artist) is dynamically oblique, with orange and black played over by dancing spots. *Santana* has softer gestures and paler, calmer hues. Here an inner square is a window in which the clean, refined surface is assaulted by a stroke that mingles a half dozen hues.

In her synthesis of styles, Harwood shows her mastery of structure and her capacity to manipulate the push-pull possibilities of color. Authority is unmistakable in the balance between the stable and the hovering shapes and between control and chaos. Control prevails, and Harwood continues to paint with confidence and bravado.

—Merle Schipper

1982



June Harwood. *Styx*. 1981 Acrylic on canvas, 54 x 54". Courtesy David Stuart Galleries.