POMONA, NEW JERSEY

Gerald Hayes

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Gerald Hayes is not a Suprematist, for his work has no mystical connotations. Neither is he a Productivist, for his work yields no utilitarian aesthetic. Rather Hayes takes the Constructivist stance, championing both form and function by way of the logic of classic rational order. This particular terrain of formalist painting is less concerned with the intrinsic qualities of painting as an object as it is concerned with the idealization of the abstract order of mathematics and geometry. Hayes approaches painting with authenticity and authority, working dexterously within a tricky and difficult territory. For in these days of Postmodernism even the most committed of abstract painters can look jaded. How strange it is to find one without the trope of that irony which serves to undermine modernism's reinterpretation of classical order, an order which by its very own determined nature is utopian.

This ideal of regularity is reflected in the particular shape Hayes has nominated to be his singular structural element, the circle. Hayes uses these closed forms of no direction to unobtrusively reorder his idiom. His circles only imply infinite expansion, for neither progress or change find actuality in these consistently growing diameters. Fragmented into arcs, they sprout forth trajectories which only turn back into themselves, much like the symbol of the snake swallowing its own tail. They are the clashing and congealing of so many ying and yang universes, indicating that we are moving away from one center only to intersect with another center's periphery.

Despite Hayes' emphasis on the images of harmony, stability, and rationality, the work is not systematic as a Sol LeWitt may be. His pictures are often the residue of much plotting from outside their physical parameters. There is an underlying streak of the intuitive and of the arbitrary. One cannot reconstruct his procedures, and perhaps Hayes does not intend us to successfully do so. The surface of the painting seems based on aesthetics rather than a predetermined ordering. What confronts our senses directly is thus a structuring which, rather than concealing Hayes' sensuous approach to Constructivism, tries holding it in check. Saul Ostrow



Gerald Hayes, Green Beret, 1987, acrylic on canvas, 48x60 in.