CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTH RIDGE

EXPLORING THE PROPERTIES OF COLOR THROUGH REPEATED CONFIGURATIONS

An abstract submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in

Painting

by

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The abstract of Robert Linn Cormack is approved.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ................................................ page 1

LIST OF FIGURES

| Figure 1  | untitled, 1972          | acrylic on canvas, 66" x 90"..... page 4 |
| Figure 2  | untitled, 1972          | acrylic on canvas, 66" x 90"..... page 5 |
| Figure 3  | untitled, 1972          | acrylic on canvas, 66" x 90"..... page 6 |
| Figure 4  | untitled, 1972          | acrylic on canvas, 66" x 90"..... page 7 |
ABSTRACT

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This series of paintings demonstrates abstract horizontal configurations of interrelating bands of color. The problem is to present a composition, within a rectangular framework, allowing for maximum color juxtaposition within a severely non-representational format.

Color is the dominant motif and the key to the composition. The system devised is one in which maximum juxtapositions are possible. Since there is no fixed point of focus, the color causes optical expansions and contractions over the whole surface. This optical "excitement" is one aim of the exploration into color.

The motif of alternating broken and straight lines
provides the opportunity to expand each color's field of juxtaposition; i.e., one band of color may infringe on six others instead of only two (Fig. 1). Each color is distributed in a logical repetitive design throughout the composition. Such a rigid scheme emphasizes the inventive play of color and line, and provides solutions which are constantly fresh. Color can be exploited to the fullest by subjecting the elements of the composition to such a linear format.

Since the reference points within the painting constantly change, the only stationary reference point is the rectangular physical shape of the painting itself. The repetition of the pattern creates a time sequence because the eye is required to move back and forth and up and down (Fig. 2). Therefore no portion of the composition looks the same twice.

The dominant color is applied within masked-off lines across the painting. Alternating "broken" lines are applied in predetermined patterns. These patterns create sets of optical vertical lines which induce tension and relieve monotony (Fig. 3).

The secondary colors are chosen in an intuitive fashion; that is, the dominant color first applied will suggest the next color, and so on. A given painting may have had its range of colors chosen in an apparently casual manner, but the hard-edged format is carefully
controlled so that "paint handling" and other seductive effects do not obscure the primary information, color (Fig. 4).

These "stripe" paintings have grown out of a need to fully explore all the properties of color, including the emotional impact of particular color combinations. This represents an effort to go beyond the color experiments conducted during the last few years by many artists who increased the color juxtapositions and combinations in a given painting. Such an investigation is valid because its conclusions, the paintings, are statements with ultimate meanings which are emotional, aesthetic, and poetic.
Fig. 1  untitled, 1972
acrylic on canvas, 66" x 90"
Fig. 2  untitled, 1972
acrylic on canvas, 66" x 90"
Fig. 3  untitled, 1972
acrylic on canvas, 66" x 90"
Fig. 4  untitled, 1972
acrylic on canvas, 66" x 90"