

Andrea Belag
Bill Maynes Gallery,
through May 4
(see Chelsea & vicinity).

Painting abstractions with sangfroid and a strong sense of purpose is no small feat in our technological age. Even so, while abstraction's moment is undeniably over, there are young artists who still try to make it relevant. Andrea Belag, who has been showing regularly in New York and internationally since the mid-1980s, is one of those artists. Best known for paintings that recall Mark Rothko or Brice Marden, Belag's new work also brings to mind the moving bands of color in Jeremy Blake's recent video "paintings."

This show consists of 13 gouaches on paper. Organized around loose grids, the paintings suggest architectural interiors. They also have a somewhat Caribbean palette, having been influenced by Belag's recent travels in Cuba. However, one doesn't have to know this; the paintings work because of Belag's ability to keep associative and conceptual options open, and each picture invokes a different mood. Encountering them in a gallery is a slow revelation; for any viewer coming in from the gray streets of Chelsea, her watery browns, turquoise blues and



Andrea Belag, *Untitled (Cuba Series #17)*, 2001.

lemon yellows provide a palpable sense of warmth while also lending themselves to multiple interpretations.

While heroic abstraction is not as pervasive today as it was in the '50s, it maintains an increasingly unique role as a vehicle for visual ideas, even in the face of advancements in digital technology. Sidelined though it may be, abstract painting will simply become more important with every show of fleeting imagery that can be turned off by throwing a switch.
—Franklin Sirmans