



Andrea Belag, *Moor*, 2000, oil on canvas, 66 x 72". Bill Maynes.

Andrea Belag

BILL MAYNES

Whether we see them as metaphors for the way we perceive the natural world or as literal views from a window, Andrea Belag's paintings offer multiple paths into territory made familiar through modernist geometry. In this beautiful show, the hint of the real lying just beneath the surface of the paintings gave Belag's images a double life, without compromising their integrity as pure abstraction or homages to nature.

As in her last show, Belag employed broad and narrow bands of fluidly brushed transparent color in horizontal and vertical sweeps. In most of the paintings, a broad stroke across the top combines with vertical elements on the sides to form a windowlike structure. The interior areas—composed of stripes suggestive of a horizon—imply both deep space

and a flat surface, making it appear as if the viewer is looking both at and through Belag's compositions. Further, in her deft juxtapositions of color and surface texture, which varies from liquidly transparent to almost frostily crystalline, Belag makes each painting a syncopated play of advancing and receding elements.

The artist's vocabulary, like different fabrics woven on the same loom, is pleasingly varied. In the painting *Moor*, for example, she contrasts somber ultramarines and maroon with fragile warm, light tones. Edward Hopper feels near. *Black Tie* and *Blue Shadows* are hotter, more upbeat works, but they still retain a gloaming light. Belag explores both sides of the divide between the real and the ideal with equal intensity and tantalizing beauty.

—Kit White