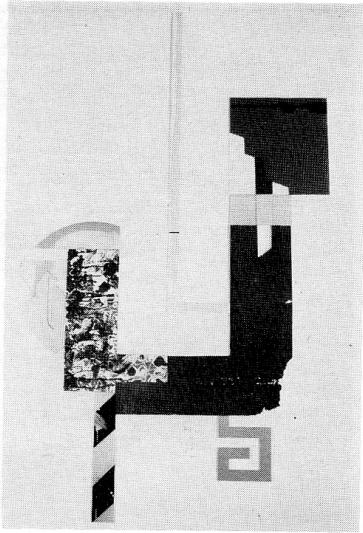


ARTFORUM

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DIKE BLAIR

By Ronny H. Cohen



Dike Blair, *Turner*, 1981, enamel and acrylic on Masonite and glass, 100 × 64".

DIKE BLAIR

Dike Blair's works from 1980–81 are more strikingly aggressive about painterly and architectural qualities than those that directly preceded them. The

six examples here, like the earlier ones, are made of acrylics and enamels poured and sprayed onto different materials—paper, Masonite, and glass are favorites; they are installed, similarly, flush against the wall with Velcro. But the earlier work toned down color, played up the competition among the multiple parts of the compositions, and asked the question, "Is it painting, sculpture, or pictorial construction?" The pieces in the present group tone up color, play on active relationships between the parts of the whole composition, and assert themselves as painterly but architecturally informed pictorial constructions.

Turner, 1981, is representative. Its surfaces are frontal and display rich contrasts in color and texture; the abstract shapes are both regular and irregular, curved and angled; structures are additive; placements engage the wall's surface. Like the others here, this work deals with pictorial/perceptual and architectural/conceptual issues. There are references to the "New York Five's" version of architectural post-modernism. Blair, like Michael Graves for example, freely mixes architectural signs and periods in a single piece. But even if you don't immediately get the hidden reference that a broken zigzag, say, is intended to carry, the same message of "architecture" is called out by various visual aspects of these sensuous and imposing paintings, including the structure, scale, and directly-on-the-wall setting.

—RONNY H. COHEN