

Kate Shepherd's art. In her earlier diptychs on wood panels, Shepherd's interest lay primarily in simple lines and geometric volumes, painted almost whimsically on top of deep colors. While the diptych format encouraged a logical reading of the forms as actual, or "real," objects, the artist employed a number of optical tricks to subvert the narrative: frontal volumetric planes became their reverse, defining corner lines were strangely absent, and implied horizon lines ruptured as they shifted from one panel to the other. Initially, these seemed like puzzling and arbitrary choices; perhaps they could be read as a critique or suspicion of our belief in geometric art. Yet further examination revealed that these disconnects and absences were actually an acknowledgment of our complicated, subjective existence. Nothing's perfect in the world, but still the world is here, and our perception of it is both limited and constantly changing.

000 Shepherd's new work expands the geometric forms into representations of three-dimensional space. As in the earlier paintings, the rich pools of color—a single, different hue for each panel—are achieved through numerous applications of wide, lateral brushstrokes. The paintings' surfaces are smooth, their brushwork barely discernible. Beneath these lustrous enamel surfaces, the earlier visual effects have evolved into more complex tensions. Quietly evocative, these tensions produce mysterious, paradoxical relationships in marked contrast to the initial easy reading for which the work seems to plead. While implying the continuation of a space across the panels, Shepherd gently skews the relational perspectives between them. Walls subtly shift, a tiled floor gently pulls away from its logical moorings, horizon lines just miss their connections. Her recent jump into a larger scale has not conceded any sense of intimacy. The new scale and the reflective enamel surfaces insert the viewer into the painting, producing a different form of intimacy based on inclusion. These new forms approach the monolithic, yet Shepherd renders them freehand with a delicate line, palpably invested with anxiety: forms of such weight and volume are practically negated by the almost spectral, reticent line quality. Our perception of the lines involves another tension: how are we to read them? Do they float just in front of the picture plane, are they incised into the paint, or are they emerging from (or submerging) just beneath the surface of the slick color? 000 This intelligent artist has absorbed the work of several artists with similar concerns who have preceded her. Josef Albers, Donald Judd, Agnes Martin, and Fred Sandback are visible in these paintings. Like those artists, Shepherd is exploring the phenomena of spatial perspective and the interplay of color with a refined and succinct visual vocabulary. This technique does not allow for missteps. The varying perspectives, the proportional sense, the dialogue of colors, the disconnects and absences must persuade with their own internal logic. The precision and assurance with which Shepherd executes the work result in these fluidly beautiful, lambent paintings. 000 Jeffrey Kopie