

## Valerie Jaudon: "Ways And Means" at Von Lintel Gallery

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Nov 2016



New York-based painter Valerie Jaudon has been associated with the Pattern and Decoration movement since its emergence in the early-mid 1970s. Her work has always distinguished itself within P&D for its relative austerity; unlike the extravagant pastiche-based work of artists such as Joyce Kozloff and Robert Kushner, Jaudon has consistently relied on a simple compositional formula based entirely on line. Indeed, her painting starkly betrays P&D's minimalist roots the movement's original strategy, you might say, of overcoming Minimalism's clarity and obduracy by co-opting it. Jaudon's evident formal source in architecture also ties her work to minimalist values; but where Minimalism responded to architectural experience in terms of object and space, Jaudon's painting reconsiders architecture as surface and as contour, emphasizing its relationship to embellishment and even

calligraphy. Islamic architecture, in particular, continues to fire Jaudon's imagination after all these years.

In the recent work she showed at Von Lintel in Los Angeles, Jaudon also takes inspiration from music, not specific musical works, but a kind of music historically associated with ornamentation, elaboration, and complex structural logic. About half the works in her show bear titles' *Stretto*, *Capriccio*, *Cadence*' associated with pre-classical composition (notably the Italian and German Baroque). Interestingly, it is only in these self-declared "musical" works that Jaudon allows herself to break free of the show's otherwise dominant compositional factor, a highly musical one. Mirroring, inversion and fugal relationships recur through this body of work, rewarding careful examination with the revelation of, yes, intricately rhythmic patterns of (normally) thick lines set on contrasting fields. "Careful examination" because most of the paintings seem randomly composed at first glance; only the overtly tile-like ones hint broadly at the rigorous counterpoint that in fact underscores almost everything.

Pattern infers repetition, and Jaudon employing as usual a two-color scheme in every painting has relied heavily here on repeated motifs. Those motifs are complex, designed to pull the eye into labyrinthine distraction. To gain its balance, the eye alights on the fact that the figures in every painting are composed each with a single line, no small discovery. But that only helps obscure the fact that effectively identical quadrants, each a rotation of the others, comprise every canvas. These forests of squiggles, seemingly stochastic in their generation, are lucid and well-behaved once you unlock them. By then, you've warmed to their heady but playful nature, your mind as gratified as your eyes.

Image:

"Capriccio," 2014

Valerie Jaudon

Oil on linen, 78" x 78"

Photo: courtesy the artist and Von Lintel Gallery