

# Shifting Geometries Liz Coats

17 January – 10 February

The deftly exquisite two-dimensional images Liz Coats creates, whether translucent glass or canvas, completely dematerialise the flat surface into deceptively ordered symmetries that draw both on the fractal mathematics of chance, probability and chaos, and the twentieth century's obsessive tradition of abstract expressionism. Their most charming and perhaps most elusive details are seemingly generated at random by the interference patterns of overlapping rhythms - like ripples on still water - or grow organically and regularly like the crystal of a snowflake.

Carefully imagined combinations of colour and form confuse and merge to engage and delight as strangely familiar yet alien qualia in both sensorium and intellect of the viewer, where the gaze can be neither naive nor cynical. The French have an expression for the sensation: *jamis vu* - the feeling that something is somehow fresh and new no matter how many times it is previously experienced.

The optical illusions dance and suggest keys to their interpretation through the false leads of their own structure. There are infinite possible directions. They are enigmatic hieroglyphs to a quantum religion.

The philosopher Leibniz suggested that the macrocosm of the universe and the microcosm of the human mind are transfused with the same cosmic patterns - a morphic resonance - that encapsulates everything in a single holographic gestalt. Perhaps it is this that appeals in Coats' images; the order suggested in chaos, or mirrors that reflect the viewer's own mind. The viewer, like Narcissus, finds whatever sympathies, harmonies, discords and affinities in the 'sweet disorder' that rise up from the pattern recognition faculty of their own mind - consciously and unconsciously.

Is Coats an artist of colour, form or visual densities? Multiple cases could be made and endlessly argued. One is reminded of the intellectual labyrinths of Jorge Luis Borges or the faith of the devout in the belief that Creation is a design that can only be understood at the apocalypse of its completion. The works, however, remain obstinate in their difficulty, hermetic, hermeneutic and immune to analysis. Their graceful beauty comes from what is hidden, and their truth is to be found in the accumulation of infinite overlapping possibilities.

**Andrew Paul Wood**