

Danieli, Fidel, "John White at Jan Baum," *Images and Issues*, (Spring, 1982), Volume 2, No. 4, page 90, illus.

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Marking a growing nationwide reputation, John White's recent solo show confirms his gifts and direction. His claim as one of the area's leading graphic artists is staked on the broad range of drawing styles he employs, from the intuitively gestural to the precise, overlaid definition of his *Con Errico* series. A dozen mixed-media drawings on vellum rework and develop a theme he explored several years ago. Though abstract, they seem to evolve directly from the *Golf* series, produced over the last five years. The repeated motif might be described crudely as a frontal view of a damlike fence of colored slats which blocks a mountain passage. The drawings, which preceded a white-water kayak trip on Oregon's Klamath River, anticipate a new configuration.

In two acrylic-on-Plexiglas works, the painting *Klamath* and the *Little Blossom Falls* installation/wall construction, the central triangles of space suggest precipitous mountain peaks. The lay of the land in the previous *Golf* series was deep, marked as it was by diagrammatic devices of the golf ball into a space established by a sharply receding one-point perspective. In these recent works, White raises the vanishing point to the top center of the picture plane, thus, flattening out the space and reducing the potential for movement to a shallow play of in and out. The artist has compensated for the greater two-dimensionality of the surface by stretching bands out laterally in nondecorative swaths of pattern. Underlying most of these works is an obvious symmetrical grid and a starlike composition. The clarity of White's manmade inventions based on uncompromising structural motifs and patterns is tempered by rapid, brushy strokes describing soft-edged reminiscences of sky, rocks, cascades, and the green of vegetation.

All these elements have appeared in White's repertoire from the beginning of his career, in the mid-sixties. He consistently sets himself the problem of combining straight-line structures with organic elements, contrasting flat ambiguity and solid form with three-dimensional possibilities. In this series he has added the clarity of a modular triangular graph, a convincing invention of specific sites, and rich, glowing color. The color, created by parallel linear fields and transparent overlaps, is subtle and delicate.

White's energetic physicality is concentrated in these drawings. His background in athletics, his practice of sports and his body orientation to performance art are disciplined here, honed to a level of refinement I've not seen before in his art.