

Barbara A. MacAdam, Joaquim Chancho, ARTnews, November 2002, p.275

Joaquim Chancho

HAIM CHANIN

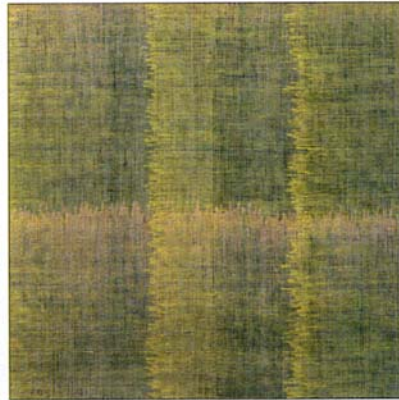
In this lilted show of works by Catalan artist Joaquim Chancho, consisting of ten tempera-on-paper and two oil-on-canvas paintings, there was not too much food for thought but abundant servings of visual pleasure.

All surface and color, beautifully wrought, Chancho's paintings of essentially woven hues are very Spanish in their bright, warm tones and gentle abstract attitude. They pertain to and are also very much of the international Minimalist movement of the 1970s with their gridded geometries and attention to surface, yet at the same time they disrupt the surface, causing a visual jitteriness, given the layered and slightly irregular patterning. Here, the emphasis is on process (the materials and colors in and of themselves). Chancho is also associated with the "Support-Surface" movement of the '70s based in southern France. This group emphasized undermining the supports of artworks (the stretchers) and disrupting the reading of the paintings' surface.

Yellows and blues and greens, lavenders and striking pinks emerge in varying combinations to form layered grids, and with the overlappings at the edges of the squares and rectangles the colors embrace, letting the viewers' eyes do the blending. We were reminded here of the Spanish painter Juan Uslé, an inveterate investigator of the variety and potential of abstraction (in particular his rows of compulsively marked lines that evoke both writing and landscape), and of the Catalan artist Joan Hernandez Pijuan, whose lyrical, spare paintings consisting of just a squiggle or line against a solid backdrop are marked by simplicity and brightness.

But what seems missing in Chancho's paintings is the imperceptible underlying tension that is so crucial to minimalism and nonrepresentational art—the idea that something is being concealed beneath the surface.

—Barbara A. MacAdam



Joaquim Chancho,
Paper 41-42, 2001,
gouache on rice
paper, 53" x 53".
Haim Chanin.