

# MORRISONGALLERY

## Jonathan Perlowsky ARTnews Review October 2009

With works spanning four decades, this exhibition provided a brief seminar in formal abstract painting. The engaging show brought together highlights from Jonathan Perlowsky's experiments with shaped monochrome canvases, hard-edged stripe compositions, drip paintings, and unconventional materials, such as mirrors and glitter.

Introducing the show was the dramatic painting *Kashmir* (1978), an expanse of pure white more than 15 feet wide, with two asymmetrical parts jutting at sharp angles in all directions. One seems to reach out directly toward the viewer. Perlowsky has said that calculating such precise forms consumed as much as several months. So by the early '80s he shifted to other adventures, seemingly more influenced by street culture than by cerebral corners of art history. Works from this period include tall mirrors dripping with Day-Glo washes and canvases painted with graphic shapes recalling stenciled graffiti.

Lessons learned pop up in the artist's later works. The most captivating mid-period piece here, *Japaneses Eyes* (1988), was a six-cornered canvas featuring a central target surrounded by truncated arcs that nearly harmonize the smooth circle and acute corners. In more recent works, the mirrors recur in the form of shards—seemingly haphazard piles covered in thick rivulets of paint. It's as if a destructive impulse had infused the wan earlier pieces with energy.

The exhibition's most winning offering was a selection of recent vertical-stripe paintings made of stained and painted wood planks. The rich colors show that the artist has found a balance between his impulses toward brashness and excessive caution. And the manner, in which the planks were set against the wall, just slightly askew or augmented with spire-like extensions of their metal frames, demonstrated a new playfulness and subtlety in Perlowsky's approach.

-Eric Bryant ARTnews