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Yunhee Min at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Before Frank Stella turned obviousness into a virtue by saying “what you see is what you see,” and even before Oscar Wilde told us that “surface was the great revealer,” a widely circulated adage held that one could describe somebody or something as “an open book” as a way of indicating an absence of subtext or hidden agenda. This maxim was pressed into service as the guiding spirit of Yunhee Min’s impressive four-part installation, *out of bounds (from near and afar)*, at Yerba Buena Center of the Arts, where she is the Wattis Artist-in-Residence. If you have recently spent any time in San Francisco, you may have seen one of the four parts: a Muni bus painted on each side with five vertical bands of very pleasing color and an advertisement for the exhibition affixed to the rear of the bus.

applied to the front faces of the ten steps of the gallery’s outer terrace. There are other more subtle chromatic alteration applied to the six outer pylons supporting the gallery’s roof, and these too are visible from the adjacent street. More important is the fact that these adjustments to YBCA’s outer shell are best viewed from within the spacious main gallery where the largest component of *out of bounds* is presented as a single stand-alone object in an otherwise empty room. The object appears to be a giant open book with its spine turned upward to form 20-foot tall A-frame structure that is thirty feet wide and fifty feet long. Viewers are free to walk underneath to see that it is made of 3/4-inch Sheetrock affixed to a sturdy aluminum frame. But it is the outer surface that makes a stunning statement, for again we see Min’s vibrant polychrome bands of saturated acrylic paint. Part of the reason for this is that the A-frame almost reaches up to the room’s high ceiling, making it a perfectly snug fit in relation to its spacious confines. But the most salient reason why the work is so impressive is found its chromatic energy, especially as it contrasts with the regimented dullness of its surroundings.

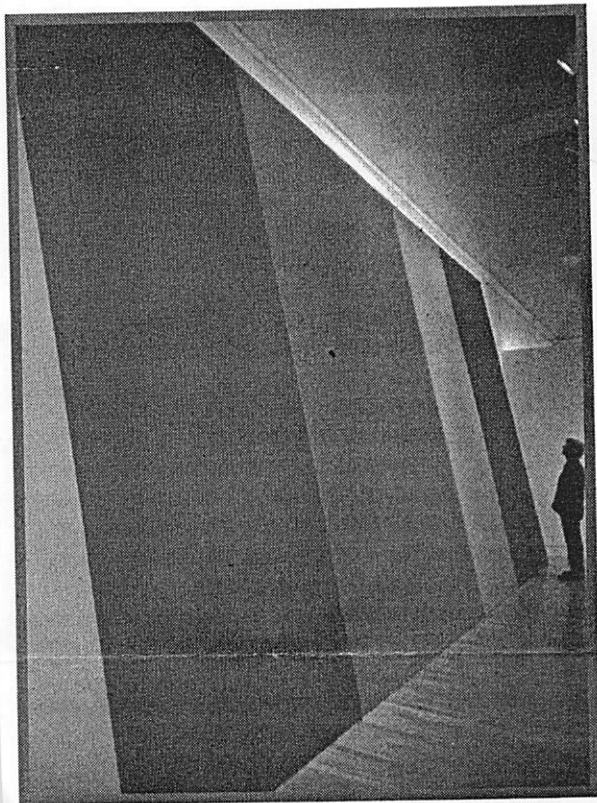
Min’s chromaticism is very much in the spirit of artists such as Ellsworth Kelly and the late post-1959 work of Morris Louis, but the conceptual thrust of her project seems more in keeping with the work of Daniel Buren, the contemporary French artist who did much to take his work beyond the bounds of the convening authority of the institutional setting. Indeed, for all of their ebullient cheerfulness, Min’s stripes do manage to share Buren’s suggestion of universal bar codes delimiting all aspects of everyday space, and this gives them a disturbing undertone. This is perhaps most evident in the fourth segment of the installation, that being a small artist’s book that encapsulates the thrust of the whole project in miniature form. When I visited the gallery, the book was only viewable as a mock-up, but even in that preliminary form it carried a clear allusion to Duchamp’s valise works, and in so doing, also revealed the *en*

abyme relationship of introverted source code to the architectonics of spectacle.

—Mark Van Proyen

out of bounds (from near and afar): Yunhee Min closes October 5 at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, 701 Mission St., San Francisco.

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Yunhee Min, *Voodoo*, 2001, installation.

These bands are bright polychrome, with some colors slightly tinted and others shaded in a manner that makes the ensemble quintet feel vibrant and upbeat, casting the bus as a rolling anti-depressant operating at playful variance with bleak urban surroundings.

The viewer doesn’t have to enter the gallery to see the second iteration of Min’s work, for it too is “out of bounds.” Specifically, it takes the form of horizontal bands of the same appetizing color

