

MARIO NAVES

# Julie Evans' Infinite Vistas Inspired by Indian Miniature Art

You want ravishing, I'll give you ravishing. Metaphor Contemporary Art, nestled among the antique shops dotting Atlantic Avenue in downtown Brooklyn, is exhibiting a stunning group of abstract paintings by Julie Evans. Ms. Evans juxtaposes delicately rendered ornamental motifs—a mandala-like circle is the linchpin of her pictorial vocabulary—against grainy runs of paint, setting in motion compositions that undulate, mutate and crystallize right before our eyes.

The pictures evince her continuing fascination with the art of non-Western cultures, particularly that of India.

Space in Ms. Evans' paintings is deep and fluid, awash with light and suffused with portent. Bobbing within it are dottings and ribbons of pattern, at times submerged by a golden haze, at other times coalescing into tangible structures. Hazy yellows, velvety greens and crystalline alizarins distinguish the palette, making the sur-

faces surprisingly rich. We don't tend to think of gouache, an opaque watercolor, as a luxuriant medium—it's too dry and matte, too taciturn a paint, to actively seduce the eye. Ms. Evans proves otherwise, beguiling the viewer with sumptuous textures and tones.

She hits her stride when working on panels measuring not much more than a foot in either direction. Ms. Evans' previous efforts were larger and discursive—willful, too. A small format strengthens, as well as makes resilient, her painterly imagination. Bringing an entire cosmos to fruition within a framework that could be tucked into a handbag, Ms. Evans creates vistas infinitely more expansive than the physical parameters of the painting's support. Clearly the conventions of Indian miniature painting have become second nature to her. No wonder the work has gained in surety, density and scope.

*Julie Evans: Swish of the Yak Tail Fly-Whisk* is at Metaphor Contemporary Art, 382 Atlantic Avenue (open Thursday through Sunday), until Oct. 10.

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Cosmic tones: Julie Evans' *Day Sleeper*, 2002.

