

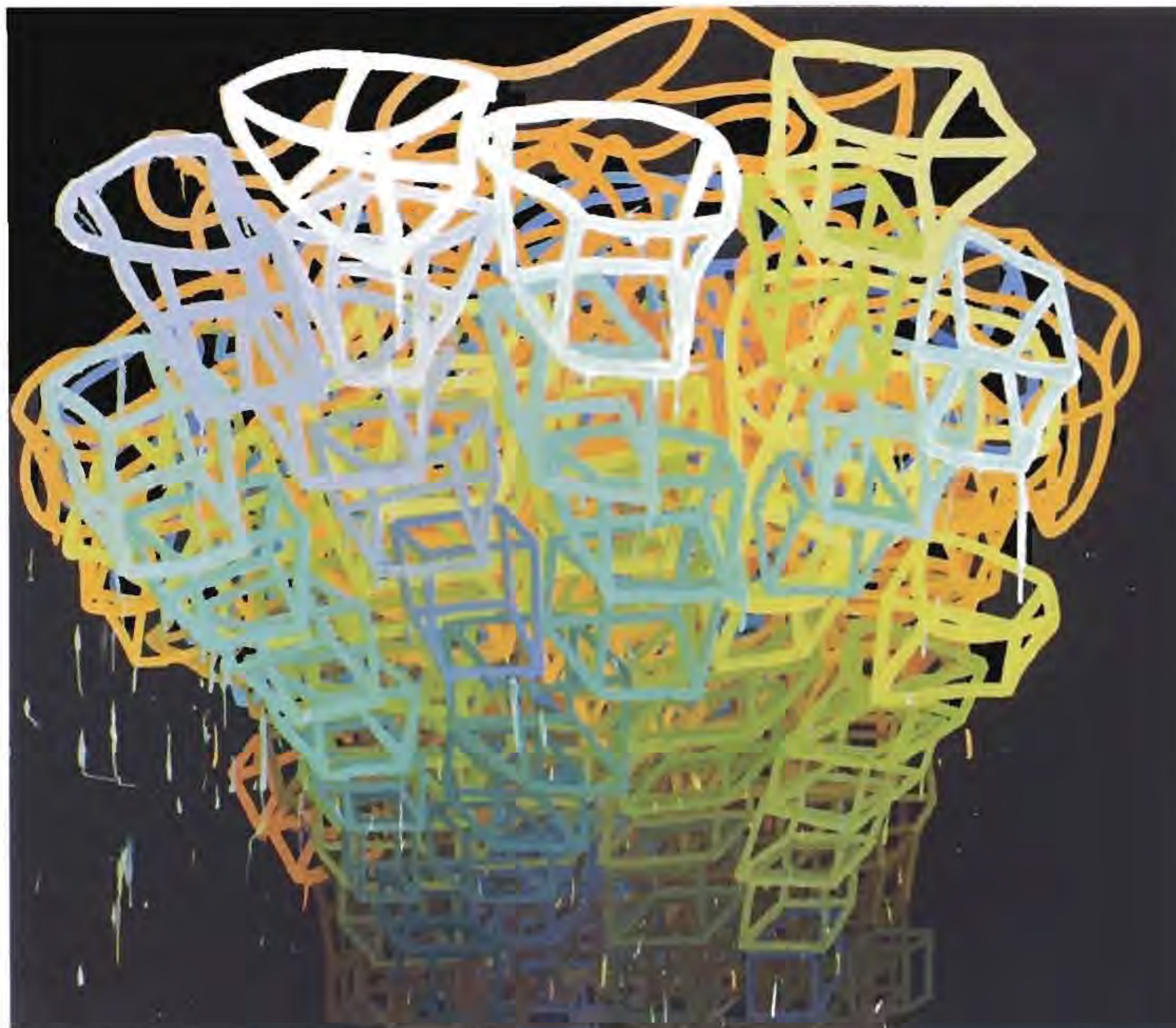
Art in America

INTERNATIONAL ● REVIEW



ROBIN RHODE MARIA LASSNIG ALFRED LESLIE
CHARLES AVERY REPORT FROM PAKISTAN MARTIN BARRÉ
VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE





Jason Karolak: *Untitled (P-0814)*, 2008, oil on canvas, 75 by 85 inches; at Massimo Audiello.

he might have appreciated), and with another turn of history's grindstone, he was reduced to a desirable eBay tchotchke (which he might not). Perhaps to underline this neutering of a political figure, in his statement Fiks declared that acquiring a Lenin memento in no way implies communist sympathies, only a recognition of that ideology's importance in the 20th-century narrative. By show's end every last postcard, paperweight and statuette had been adopted, a testament to the significance either of Lenin or of that perennial attention-getter: the word "free."

—Michael Harvey

JASON KAROLAK

MASSIMO AUDIELLO

This was Chicago-based Jason Karolak's debut show in New York, and it was a beautiful one. The title of the exhibition was "Rivers of the Same Mountain," which paraphrases a passage from Goethe's *Theory of Color* in which the author refers to the evocative powers of sound as well as color. The allusion to Goethe provides a clue to the essentially romantic profile of Karolak's practice. He is engaged in a kind of melding of the senses, and begins with a nod to the power of color and the simplest of geometric elements.

Each of the four large oils in the show (roughly 6 by 7 feet or vice versa), all 2008, starts with a meticu-

lously applied black ground that has a hard-looking matte finish. On and into this Karolak applies a webbing of thick linear forms, the width of different brushes. In *Untitled (P-0814)* he begins along the bottom edge with simple outlines of cubes and rectangles. These are filled in with deep olive greens and other earth tones, and change form, velocity and hue as the painting progresses upward. Working in approximate rows, from bottom to top, the artist warps the shapes, increasing them in size and making them lighter and brighter. Each row overlaps the one below, creating a vortex of ever more complex and exhilarating colored lines. Some of the drawing is reminiscent of Brice Marden, but the deft changes of color and value create an elemental spatial illusion rather than the Marden hum. *Untitled (P-0815)* presents a similar tipped cone configuration using irregular ovals as the building blocks, starting small and dark at the bottom, becoming brighter and bluer toward the top. The resulting form resembles an aerial view of a tornado with its dark shadow behind.

The other large paintings are variations on the same truncated cone form, the apparent exterior composed of gradated solid rectangles from one color family and the interior of smaller rectangles from another color group. The overlapping rectangles resemble shingles and scales, or formations

of coral. Painterly flourishes (drips, smears and pentimenti in the paint surface) serve to snap the works back into the realm of two-dimensional abstract painting. Metaphorically, these large paintings evoke open-ended containment, growth, change and the notion of revelation. They turn up the volume on perception.

There were also eight smaller paintings (around 2 feet high or wide), also 2008, more intimate works that operate similarly in terms of the value and hue but that generally unfold at a slower pace and more laterally. They're composed of medium-width brushstrokes laid next to each other in gently curving progressions suggesting shifts in geological or atmospheric strata. Karolak's position is quietly sanguine, generous and expansive, adding a curious grace to the new painting scene.

—Stephen Mueller

ALEXANDER ROSS

MARIANNE BOESKY AND
DAVID NOLAN

As seen in an exhibition of paintings and collages at Marianne Boesky, and of drawings at David Nolan, Alexander Ross's depictions of mysterious forms create a world that defies logic and classification. Of all artists calling their work "Untitled," perhaps Ross does so with the best justification: he doesn't want to give anything away.

In the canvases, radiant strokes of