

PATRICIA SWEETOW GALLERY

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October 20, 2006

ART Reviews

By Alan G. Artner, *Tribune* art critic

Markus Linnenbrink's exhibition at the Roy Boyd Gallery clearly proceeds from his last show here in 2004, patiently extending the colorful discourse of his abstract paintings but still showing a link with the more sober pieces he did in his hometown of Dortmund, Germany nearly two decades ago.

In place of the many organic shapes Linnenbrink scooped out in pockets to reveal early layers of paintings are now even greater numbers of concentric circles that densely cluster and, occasionally, break away. The intense chromatic variations uncovered by the artist's "excavations" give each undulating surface a wildness that seems held in check by the precision of his primary unit, the circle, in combination with a glossy, hard application of pigment. At once there is the sense of nothing being left up to chance as well as a strong improvised element.

Linnenbrink's vertical stripe paintings are more conventional, though they, too, are coloristically brilliant, invariably end in drips that become stalactites at the bottom of each work and are painted with such thickness and slickness as to prompt touch. It is as if the somber minimalism of the artist's early years had been reapproached and pursued while on peyote.

The quirks continue to be "sandwiches" of paint that rise to a height of 18 layers, scooped-out paintings that refer to reclining nudes and pieces incorporating photographs (this time from streets in Oklahoma) along with all the other vigorously bubbling stimuli.