



ART IN REVIEW

## ART IN REVIEW; Richmond Burton

By HOLLAND COTTER

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Cheim &amp; Read

521 West 23rd Street

Chelsea

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With each show, Richmond Burton seems a little more to relax his impulse toward symmetry and to indulge his gift for ornament. He does both in the melodious, jazzy abstract paintings here.

Structure is never absent; it's just unobtrusive, even accidental. The paintings are built up in stages, but never give the impression of being hard-worked. They have a fluid, textural presence, like luxury fabrics printed with overlapping, off-register layers of patterning.

The opulent sheen of the new paintings, with their metallic colors -- gold, silver, copper -- and clusters of stippled dots, like beadwork, is striking. So is the sensuality of the predominantly curving forms that suggest flames, swarming sperm cells and scraps of Arabic calligraphy. The lyrical "Cabinessence" is a kind of a forest of shardlike gold leaves whose irregular expanding and contracting rhythms bring the paintings of Alma Thomas (1891-1978) to mind.

Like Thomas, Mr. Burton seems to be a nature painter at heart (he moved from Manhattan to East Hampton, Long Island, last year). But he has an urbane, indoor sense of concentration, whose notion of natural light is what's found in the jewel-like glint of a Klimt painting, in glow-in-the-dark psychedelia from the 1960's, or in sari cloth shot through with silver thread. HOLLAND COTTER

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