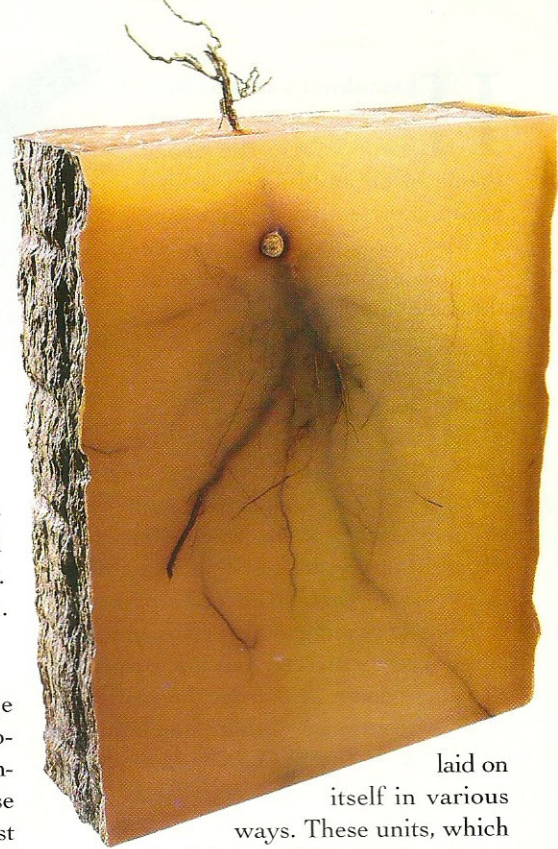


Exploring Nature and Line as Metaphor

Artists employ the complexities of geometry and the natural world to examine the allure of austerity.

By George Melrod

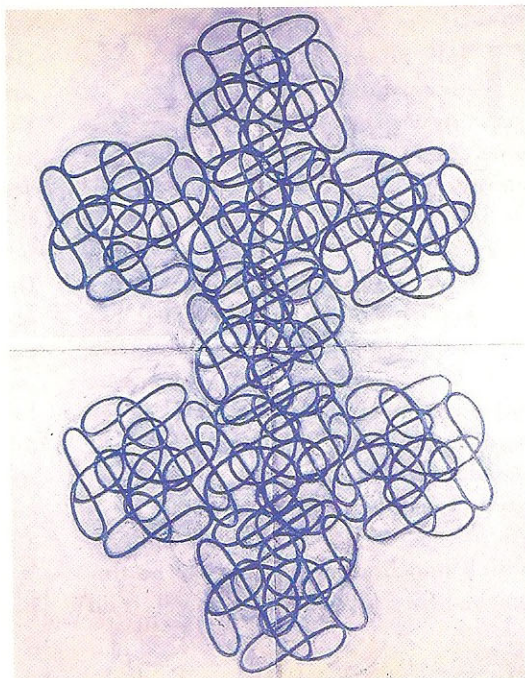


laid on itself in various ways. These units, which she dubs mandalas, are in turn repeated in various configurations in each work, such as *Untitled 4* (below left). "What I like about the work is the way it toes the line between order and chaos," Hill observes. "It has no beginning and no end. My hope is that if you follow the lines like a roadmap, they will leave you with the sense of having been somewhere." At Lennon Weinberg, New York, February 9–March 11.

There are many ways of examining the interrelationship of nature and artifice, and Tom Czarnopys takes a particularly elegant tack: He preserves, in golden glycerin soap, roots or tree branches from the forests of his native Michigan. They look like radiant fossils (above), and his newest works include strands of vegetation. But unlike insects in amber, which lie static across the millennia, Czarnopys's works subtly evolve—the glycerin slowly turns translucent over time. Slyly grafting minimalist form to an ecological fetishism, the works hold out their tentative promise of symbiosis with quiet gravity. At Zolla/Leiberman, Chicago, February 17–March 18.

complex balances—between concept and gesture, detachment and sensuality, solemnity and play. Opening February 24 at L.A. Louver, Los Angeles.

Exploration of the bridge between drawing and sculpture can prove to be a fascinating experiment. Such is the case with sculptor Robin Hill's newest work, a rigorously distilled blend of geometric formalism and mystical symbolism. At the heart of her show are five large drawings, each almost nine feet tall, made on four-part panels of specially waxed paper. All are done only in blue on white, recalling Delft tiles, and all consist of four-part units generated from the same curved line, repeated and over-



Jonathan Lasker's paintings are not easy to snuggle up to, but beneath their impassive veneer lurks a deft intelligence and the obsessive drive of a scientist who repeats the same experiment over and over in varying formulations. In most of his paintings Lasker contrasts simple linear geometries with thick, colorful doodles. Sometimes, as in *The Happiness of Nations*, (above) he sets out several boxy configurations of decreasing sizes and then resolves them in a brightly colored jumble. At times this juxtaposition has an almost sexual frisson, as the rational forms seem to climax and spill over in frenetic sensuality. Lasker's works also possess a self-mocking wit, suggested by their grandly puffed-up titles and the deadpan way they seem to parody abstract expressionism. For all their reductiveness, Lasker's paintings strike some

