



David Lloyd, *Untitled*, 1991, Oil on canvas, 45 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 37 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Courtesy Margo Leavin Gallery.

The modernist dichotomies of image and frame, representation and abstraction, and subject and object are tugged into hallucinatory limbo by **David Lloyd's** fantastic, elastic, amoeboid concoctions at Margo Leavin (February 23–March 23). Attraction butts up against repulsion and swings back around to embrace it in these large, exuberant, eccentrically colored paintings. Once, it's a serpentine swirl of wood covered in washes of green and pink coiling back upon itself to embrace an inflated, incandescent egg. Then, it's a whitewashed octagon of irregular proportions that frames a perfect ruby spot which frames a smaller golden spot which frames the smallest grayish spot. Like those Russian *matryoshka* dolls that continue to reveal ever smaller dolls lurking within, the paintings proffer double, triple, even quadruple readings—as figure and ground, line and color, consistently, persistently reverse themselves.

The exhibition comprises 15 untitled works from 1990 and 1991, all of which resist the literalist space of modernist abstraction to make room for transformation, permutation, and metaphoric association. And so we have the "serpent" gaping hungrily at the "egg"; and quivering horizontal lines posing as horizons, separating the blues and greens of the "ocean" from the reds and browns of the "subterranean" depths. It's a gambit that works well so long as allusion supersedes illusion, which it does most of the time. Lloyd missteps only when he forces the chromatic jumble to coalesce into rigidly symmetrical patterns, matching a red here with a red there, balancing blue on one side with blue on the other. Such a capitulation to the purely decorative demands of the work performs little else than a disservice to that work's broader reaches.

Susan Kandel