

# ARTFORUM

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REVIEWS

NANCY OLIVIER

55 MERCER



Nancy Olivier, *Vestige*, 1992,  
acrylic on canvas, 72 x 60".

Nancy Olivier treats painting and drawing as equals rather than as elements in a strict hierarchy. In this show, Olivier used quite a large stretch of wall as well as canvas and paper for her emotionally charged, abstract compositions. Images seemed to separate from surfaces, to propel forms and their contents outside the viewer's perceptual boundaries.

In *Night Light*, 1993, an eight-by-twelve-foot wall painting, bustling linear networks traverse a muted ground, enhancing the ceaseless movement of the gestural shapes. This work is suggestive of the process of recognizing the patterns and structures of one's own behavior. The bold pencil lines in this piece recall Jackson Pollock's seminal drawings from the late '40s, crowded with strange configurations. Other works, however, had more of a minimalist character, such as *Vestige* and *Screen Memory #2* (both 1992).

In fact, Olivier's deployment of the language of abstraction is based largely on her appropriation of minimalistic bands and grids, and post-Minimalist strategies, from which she creates works that emphasize abstraction's emotive rather than formal potential. The vertical drips of *Screen Memory #1*, and the grid in *Screen Memory #2*, both function to create a bridge between color and darkness, as if figuring the power of subjective perception.

—Ronny Cohen