

San Fernando Valley State College

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PICTORIAL RHYTHM  
THROUGH THE USE OF REPEATED CONFIGURATIONS

An abstract submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in

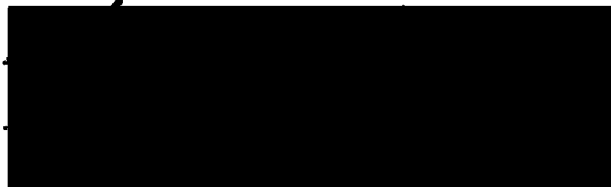
Painting

by

Linda Allen Bassler

January, 1968

The abstract of Linda Allen Bassler is approved:



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## ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PICTORIAL RHYTHM  
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## CHAPTER I

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this study to explore the development of a series of paintings which are primarily concerned with the interplay of a basic application of linear bands of color and an overpainting of recurrent non-objective configurations. Specifically, the initial problem is to present, within a square format, a composition that allows a continuing exploration of the possible relationships between a controlled, monochromatic underpainting and an overlaid series of rapid brush strokes that are at once non-symbolic and non-representational color notations.

## CHAPTER II

## DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS

The monochromatic underpainting is composed of waving bands moving laterally across the painting. The opaque surface of the bands is modulated by contrasting textural responses in the overpainting. Inasmuch as the lateral direction of these vertically layered bands rises and falls in smooth intervals of undulation while subtle changes

in value gently distinguish one horizontal from the next, the principal effect of the undersurface is one of closely unified color and regular intervals of movement (figure 1).

As the first step in the painting process, the substructure of monochromatic bands offers a special system which stimulates the action of the subsequent overpainting. The divisions and directions of the bands guide the application of color strokes whose final integration into the substructure is the result of the subjective process of voluntary choice.

In the relationship of special framework to overlaid strokes, the quality of repetition stands forth as a common element to both. A sense of repeated image is noticeable in the characteristic sameness of shape in the overlaid color notations, as well as in the fact that the strokes multiply in numbers sufficient to dominate the final surface of the painting (figure 2). Repetitive, but in a less dominant manner, are the horizontal bands beneath the surface overpainting which have a similarity of color, value, and dimension that makes them only slightly distinguishable from one another.

The recurrence of like features of technique and composition creates, in addition to the presence of repetition, a sensation of rhythmical movement and time interval. Implicit in the perception of repetition is the active movement the eye must make from one configuration to the next. When the time interval between each eye movement occurs in a regular pattern, the perception is that of pictorial rhythm (figure 3). If the intervals of perception are irregular and do not follow a predictable time sequence, the movement of the eye

continues to develop rhythmical patterns with the difference being uneven rather than regular time intervals (figure 4).

Both regular and irregular rhythmical patterns recur over the surfaces of the paintings. The repetition of similar color notations in regular time intervals is determined by the extent to which the placement of the notations adheres to the fixed intervals of the substructure. The lesser the degree of influence from the underpainting, the more the rhythm of the strokes is dependent upon the action of the imagination in creating spontaneous variables.

### CHAPTER III

#### CONCLUSION

Throughout the series of paintings in which the interplay of substructure and overlying forms has been explored, I have come to consider the inter-relationships between these elements as creating a new visual entity whose reality is transmittable only in the pictorial terms of visual movement conditioned by the principles of repetition and rhythm.

That the act of painting creates an object to be observed by persons other than the artist necessarily creates a problem, since the subjective understanding of these principles of the painting by the viewer may differ considerably from that of the creator. To attempt to bridge this gap has been the purpose of this paper.