

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Roberta Smith, "Maureen Gallace," *New York Times*, October 1, 1993

The New York Times

Maureen Gallace Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery 51 Greene Street (near Broome Street) SoHo Through Oct. 16

Maureen Gallace's charming little paintings mine the unlikely overlap between Fairfield Porter (or early Edward Hopper) and Allan McCollum. Their red barns and white houses nestle comfortably and comfortingly in fields of green against trees of darker green, but they are strangely geometric, devoid of doors or windows or any signs of life. They are also rendered a bit awkwardly, almost naively: the colored planes of the buildings never quite form convincing volumes; the greenery has a filled-in generality. Above all, as in Mr. McCollum's work, the motifs repeat with only minor adjustments in painting after painting.

There are intimations of a larger conceptual framework, which needs clarification, and a self-conscious attitude toward painting's earlier conventions that layers sincerity with insincerity. Or perhaps Ms. Gallace is like Agnes Martin, an artist of subtle refinements and variations. Viewed a few at a time, these images are ineluctably tender. When they are looked at in a larger group, it sometimes seems possible that one is liking them for qualities quite distant from what the artist had in mind.