



OAKLAND
"Immaterial"
at Chandra Cerrito Contemporary

Art which investigates perception engages on a primal level. As layers of information are stripped away, leaving pure sensation, one shifts into a heightened sense of awareness where any small variation in stimuli attains enhanced significance. Light and Space movement artists such as Dan Flavin, Robert Irwin and James Turrell exploited this engagement in their groundbreaking work. "Immaterial," recently on view at Chandra Cerrito Gallery, featured two artists who likewise explore windows of perception. Texas-based Cathy Cunningham-Little presented four striking light installations, on three walls, and a broad pillar in the darkened rear gallery space. Geometric patterns in vibrant, jewel tones bathed the walls in color—hues at times so deeply saturated the walls appeared to have been painted. But no, Cunningham-Little achieves her effects strictly with light ... and small panels and shards of dichroic glass. Developed by NASA for a variety of scientific applications, dichroic glass is coated with metallic particles which reflect and refract light from different bands of the visible spectrum.

Metamorphosis (2012) mounts three curved shapes of dichroic, layered in spots, and closely grouped in a triangle above eye level; royal blue, magenta, chartreuse, and yellow blend in a fanciful and ethereal, weightless image. *VVCI* (2012), taking its title from Val Verde County in West Texas—where the artist worked on an archaeological dig containing thousands of petroglyphs—is the largest and most complex of these works, with patterns of light sweeping from ceiling to near the floor: triangular shapes zigzag off to thrust at one and five o'clock.

In the deepest recess of the gallery is Bay Area-based Amy Ho's *Up: Down II* (2012), a two-channel video installation. Shadowy staircases—actually models which the artist has constructed, lit, and filmed—beckon with warm, rosy light; a large image was projected on the rear wall, a smaller one floor-mounted. Ho also presented glowing light boxes in the front room housing marginally defined images of monochromatic rooms—red, with a portal-like opening, blue accented by an odd, grass-like floor—which stretch how far we can take the idea of "a room" and still have it cohere.

Painting, or sculpting, with light, rather than using illusion to create its suggestion, inhabits a very different, weightless place from traditional plastic arts. It is safe to assume that the radiance associated with the divine, and which so many have reported as beckoning them to the afterlife, is fairly deeply embedded into our collective consciousness. No wonder, perhaps, that light-based work often produces such feelings of contentment.

—BARBARA MORRIS

"Up: Down II," 2012, Amy M. Ho

TWO CHANNEL VIDEO PROJECTION

DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

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