

CHEIM & READ

The New York Times

LEISURE/WEEKEND DESK
ART GUIDE

By GRACE GLUECK
Published: April 4, 2003

Mary Boone Gallery
745 Fifth Avenue, at 57th Street
Through April 26

Where once it was biomorphic-bristly, Bill Jensen's work seems to have mellowed over the years into softer, less definite forms, his surfaces more grounds for colors than for shapes. The forms in these latest works are really markings, sprawly scrawls and calligraphic motions that play splashily over contrasting or close-valued grounds, sometimes to gorgeous effect.

Among the most realized of the canvases is a group of six from an ongoing series called "Images of a Floating World." Based on Japanese Ukiyo-e prints, they allude to cosmic and spiritual space, as well as to the gritty goings-on in the earth itself. Especially gorgeous is "No. 25," in which a sort of root system in brilliant vermilion spills rivulets over a nuanced ground of satiny greens and pinks. But the star of the show is a painting apart from this series, "Untitled (Ochre and Red)," in which a more definite form, that of a red cross, occupies the top half of a glowing ochre field brushed thinly enough to show glints of red beneath it. The ochre runs into the cross, interrupting the completion of its shape. Harking back to medieval and Byzantine art, it's a mini-cathedral. GRACE GLUECK