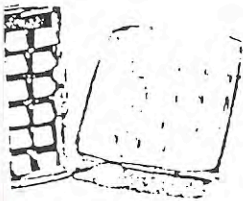
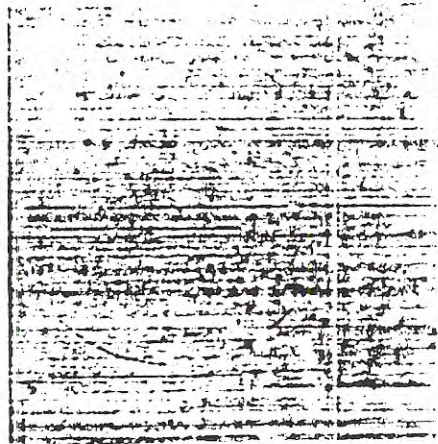


JACK WHITTEN

Jack Whitten's current paintings are visually rich and stimulating. Alternating bands of black and white create optical effects as they seem to vibrate in space; amorphous and geometric shapes in pale pastel shapes emerge from the canvas and recede to a depth beyond its surface; incisions in the paint and areas built up on or attached to the surface can be read in two or three dimensions. These paintings are about space. They superbly address a paradox inherent in painting: the presence of the real space of the painting's surface versus illusionistic space, the perspectival convention for post-Renaissance painting. Just as it is impossible to simultaneously look through a window and at the windowpane, the physical qualities of a painting must always compete with the demands of history and painting as the representation of space. Jack Whitten has examined this dilemma with subtle, original imagery which alludes to the visual vocabulary of the 20th-



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Jack Whitten, *Sigma I*, 1978
Acrylic on canvas, 64 x 64"
Courtesy Robert Miller
Gallery.

century viewer. The black, gray, and white horizontal bands are reminiscent of a television picture gone askew, a video terminal, or perhaps the thin slats of venetian blinds. Discernible yet indistinguishable shapes in blue or yellow come to life when the viewer alternates his field of focus, as when looking at the video screen and window blinds or through them to the picture and activity beyond. The experience of alternative readings proves a mentally provocative and, at the same time, visually playful experience. (Robert Miller, April 4-22)

actual events...