

From *Late Liberties*

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Mike Zahn

Note, 1997

Acrylic on plexiglas

40 x 40 x 2.5 inches

Context is an important caveat. It concedes abstraction remains in play by the sheer force of something like semantic inertia. Painting may demonstrate the medium's full capacity, a solution which artists manipulate as a corollary of brute nature. This appears as crystalline on one hand, and viscous on the other. Painting may also describe an advanced position regarding the image of technology. One axis is advanced, with painting-as-digital-drawing or as computer desktop iconography, and the other is archaic, which hypostasizes the atoms of language. When taken together, what kind of abstraction is this? What does it delineate? . . . For this answer, we will have to wait. Just as the reductionism which came to characterize modernism had its roots in the social, scientific, and technological upheavals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the generative abstractions in which new art may take part have only begun to grow.