

LOS ANGELES

Interconnected lines form patterns on the walls and floors of the gallery. Are they maps? Or just an illusion? In **Miriam Dym's** work, lines converge, merge, spin out of control, trace contours, and go off in all directions. These drawings, generated on the computer, hover between the real and the imagined. In her installations, one titled "Two Standard Stops" in the freight elevator at Post Downtown; the other titled "Don't Forget to Ask for Directions" at Post Wilshire (September 9–October 9), Dym has covered both walls and floor with digital print-outs containing abstract patterns made out of interweaving lines and shapes.

In the Downtown installation, to enter into the elevator, visitors must first pass through a curtain made of light blue gauze that has been silk-screened with an intricate pattern that functions as a veil. Once inside, one's field of vision is filled with drawings that contain numerous mechanical markings. This linear circuitry is captivating. In addition to the wall papering, Dym has installed a shelf, about chest height on which she has placed a series of small objects including paper boxes and pinwheel-like fans—all covered with different colored delicate patterns. The surprise, or highlight of the installation occurs when the elevator is in motion. As it moves from floor to floor it bypasses a bright map-like pattern that is seen through a horizontal window cut in the elevator's back wall. The resulting illusion of overlapping patterns changes with time giving viewers the sensation of passing over an aerial photograph that has been transformed into a series of lines and dots. As in all of Dym's work, the markings appear to have a func-

tion and allude to meanings, yet these maps, charts and graphs serve no purpose. They are purely decoration.

Dym's installation at Post Wilshire continues to explore these ideas. Here the gallery floor is covered by swirling red and blue lines criss-crossing against a bright yellow background. The floor is first layered with the drawings which are then covered by pieces of plexiglass, giving viewers a patterned surface to walk on. These tiles not only cover the floor but continue up the wall. Four go-cart-like sculptures are situated on the floor. Each is upholstered with another one of Dym's hand-crafted patterns. These cars beg to be sat upon and wheeled along the intertwining paths on the floor.

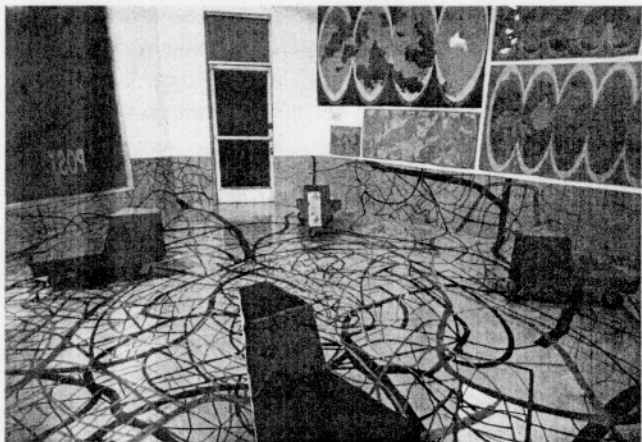
Covering the walls, floor to ceiling, are numerous map-like drawings. Each of these begins with the pattern of a flattened globe that has been spread out as a series of interconnected ovals. Dym manipulates what we take for granted—the shape and placement of the oceans, states and countries—interjecting her own imagined territories as a series of overlapping forms. Dym is interested in distorting reality. Her drawings take as their point of departure the presentation of information, specifically road maps, world maps, and aerial maps. She creates a complex web of lines and shapes based on the idea of real maps in each of her drawings. The works hover between pure abstraction and representation.

In addition to making large-scale drawings and installation works, Dym also creates small-scale sculptures. At Post Downtown the gallery is divided in half. In the front are the wall works and the floor installation, in the back gallery behind a silk-screened curtain (similar to the one that covers the elevator's entrance) are the sculptures. These smaller objects, shaped like fans, are placed upon shelves. The shelves are attached to areas of the wall, that have been painted gray, giving a neutral background (in contrast to the decorative wall coverings in the front gallery) against which the objects are viewed. The objects, a cross between a fan, a toy and a scientific instrument, are whimsical

works that add to the fun house aura of Dym's installation.

Dym's works combine new technologies with formal concerns of all-over pattern painting. Both art and technology can be seen as reference points. The works draw you in, and keep you there. Her maps feel familiar, yet depict fictions. There is a feeling of "Deja Vu" when viewing the works. Not in these sense of "we've seen this before" but in the sense of returning to what seems familiar, but is utterly new.

Jody Zellen, Los Angeles



Miriam Dym, "Don't Forget to Ask for Directions" (installation view), 1999 (photo courtesy of POSTwilshire).