

DATEBOOK

SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2001

Pleasures in rich pools of color

A powerful debut
at Braunstein/Quay

Nellie King Solomon's work at Braunstein/Quay fits no definition of painting.

But anyone who wants to defend it as art must refer to the paintings of such people as Sam Francis, Morris Louis and Helen Frankenthaler.

In "as is" (2001), pools of blood red have been deposited on one or both sides of large abutted, unframed sheets of heavy Mylar.

The object list specifies "ink and medium" as the material in play, but that gives us little to go on in deciding how to relate this work to what we intuitively accept as painting, abstract or not.

Solomon's tools and techniques leave no clear traces of their nature. We cannot even distinguish her materials' expressive qualities from the merely inertial.

Is that rich red meant to make us think of blood or merely to make us feel how inescapable

ART

NELLIE KING SOLOMON:
Paintings. Ends today. Braunstein
/Quay Gallery, 430 Clementina
St., San Francisco. (415)
278-9850.

GALLERIES

Kenneth Baker

such loaded associations are?

The flux and bleed of pigment in Solomon's tall, narrow "Strips" (2001) recall the marks left by

melting ice in Andy Goldsworthy's icicle "drawings." But the "Strips" also stir vague recollections of Asian hanging scroll paintings.

Finally only the sheer unforced lushness of Solomon's works — of those that appear least manipulat-

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Nellie King Solomon's "as is" (2001)

► GALLERIES

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ed, anyway — overcomes the tension that may arise from uncertainty about their art status. Whatever the mind says, the eye out for pleasure says yes to the drift, looseness and generosity of Solomon's work.

Her show is a powerful debut that will be hard for her to follow.