

## Dateline Brooklyn

by Stephen Maine



Steel Stillman at Momenta Art

A lot of artists are thinking about architecture conceptually, but **Steel Stillman's** approach is essentially phenomenological, having to do with the visual shaping -- of transom, handrail, molding, façade, finial -- that qualifies our experience of man-made space, that defines it by cluttering it. In his recent exhibition at **Momenta Art** on Berry Street, this mid-career painter showed two smallish flasche-on-wood pieces, in vermilion, terra cotta and black, built around concentric shapes that paradoxically flatten space while at the same time suggesting the deep recession of a hallway or a staircase.

Two larger pieces were eccentrically shaped, monochrome panels in more neutral colors, floating slightly off the gallery wall. The accompanying black-and-white works on paper, silhouettes derived from bulky furniture, suggest that the paintings have their origins in representation. It was a great-looking show by an artist with an exquisitely refined and personal visual vocabulary. Next stop for this busy painter is **Galerie van Gelder** in Amsterdam, later this year.