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## Art Review [Review of *Six Artists* Exhibit at the Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee]

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by Curtis L. Carter

"Six Artists," an exhibit of young artists at the Milwaukee Art Center, brings to the city a collection of paintings which share concern for visual expression through abstract arrangement of color and form on a flat surface.

There is no common style or theme. Nor are the directions which these paintings explore pioneering ones. Rather the painters: Edward Avedisian, Darby Bannard, Dan Christianson, Ron Davis, Larry Poon, and Peter Young, rework earlier developments. This is not to say that the paintings are merely repeating what others have done. Rather they extend methods suggested by others, in some instances finding interesting and exciting new possibilities.

I like the bright quilted and mosaic surfaces of Peter Young's bold take-off from pointillist technique. Their primitive Indian quality generates fresh visual surfaces that are distinctive and original.

Ron Davis's experiments with Renaissance perspective using fiberglas and acrylic planes are successful in the expansion of perspective-based visual arrangement. Using thin polyester strips he constructs the illusion of three dimen-

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sionality. However, unlike the Renaissance masters who used linear perspective to order picture space, so as to give the illusion of depth moving into the picture, Davis's works tend to project out into space giving them a sculpture-like quality.

Larry Poon's use of elliptical shapes on rather thin and often pastel color fields provide a visual playground for the eye. Possible combinations of the oval dots allow the eye to construct alternative and passing images out of what is given.

Dan Christianson's paintings are also thin-surfaced. Using spray gun technique in "Serpens," and adding taped bars in "Vulpercula" Christianson creates in his pictures a carnival-like atmosphere.

Very uneven in quality are the entries of Avedisian. Based on the tawdry character of his entries in this show, I wondered why he should be represented at all in a show intended to represent "the best work of the recent past." I saw nothing to distinguish him from hundreds of other younger artists.

Perhaps the greatest injustice of the show is done to painter Darby Bannard. Bannard works his color and form relations in simple shapes with careful attention to nuances of color, light, and the interplay of these elements. Two aspects of his style — one using flat untextured simple shapes and the other emphasizing grid-like textured surfaces based on changing orders in separate hues — are shown. The unfortunate circumstance is that the Bannard paintings in this show are the poorest examples of his work that I have seen.

Coming into the show I experienced first a sense of lightness and airiness, a result of the bright colors and light-textured surfaces.

At first the lightness is a relief from the demandingly heavy pictorial surfaces of Milton Resnick's paintings seen in the previous Art Center show. Then it struck me that the canvases might well be giant swaths for a textile designer's display. To me they represent a winding down of abstract painting, which as seen in this exhibit is a style urgently in search of a new direction.

The exhibit is at the Milwaukee Art Center until March 22.