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Denyse Thomasos

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Denyse Thomasos's huge, edgy, paintings marked a significant advance in the evolution of her eccentric brand of abstraction. In her earlier paintings, often composed of stacks of brightly colored lines and rectangles in shallow space, she seemed to refer simultaneously to modern painting and folk arts such as crocheted textiles.

In these new works, she is intent on carving out more depth for her compositions without abandoning her basically serial, lineal strategy. She accomplishes this by employing the elementary illusion practiced by every notebook doodler: bisecting angles with a straight line to form the corner of a cube. In *Scratch*, she layers dense thickets of loosely scripted corners to form the impression of busy streets and tall narrow buildings. Alternating precise architectural strokes with drippy transparent ones, she forms a haze that galvanizes



Denyse Thomasos,
Virtual Incarceration,
1999, acrylic on canvas,
132" x 240".
Lennon Weinberg.

her perspectival tricks into a convincing organic whole. Overall, the color is muted to cubistic grays and browns, with blue-green tones and one patch of alizarin. *Descension*, though similar in color and construction, is more complex. Space seems to warp toward a horizon in the top section of the painting, creating a sense of shelter. In place of *Scratch*'s office canyons, the action here suggests a frenetic open-air market covered by an awning inflated with wind. Raw canvas at the bottom of the picture provides a welcome visual respite.

The aptly titled *Virtual Incarceration* was the largest (132 by 240 inches), most ambitious work. With its isolated clusters of cubes, corners, and grids, the composition has the strange presence of a remote power-company substation on a rural highway. It was easy here to embrace Thomasos's vision of the picture as a cyberspace prison.

—Rex Weil