

Vital Geometries: Temporality and Timelessness in the Worldline Schreiber Paintings
by Carter Ratcliff

As its crisp curves and precise angles play off one another, Jeanette's Fintz's *Worldline Schreiber #1*, 2016, comes alive with echoes and variations. Yet *alive* implies the organic and Fintz's forms are geometric—that is, thoroughly *inorganic*—and this raises a question: how, exactly, are we to understand the rich currents of life-energy that surge through this and the four other *Worldline Schreiber* paintings? There are clues to be found in the artist's note on the title's origin. [See page x.]

In a dream of walking along a corridor in an old building, Fintz read *Worldline Schreiber* on the glass of an office door. She knew that *Schreiber* is German for *writer*. Before having this dream, she had never encountered *Worldline*—or not consciously, at least. Looking up the word, she was startled to discover that it was in active use among quantum physicists and science fiction writers. A timeline tracks an entity through time. Add the three dimensions of space and a timeline becomes a worldline: a path traced through space *and* time. Fintz's dream felt like a revelation, for it occurred early in 2016, when she had begun to paint arcs and angles extracted from geometric grids. Though these are forms, literally speaking, they have the dynamic thrust of trajectories. *Worldline* fits them perfectly. *Schreiber* acknowledges the linear, metaphorically text-like quality of the images in these paintings, each of which records a moment in the complex and intertwined lives of its geometric elements.

The more angular of these elements are plainly visible in *Being and Making* and other paintings from 2015. Curves prevail in *The Illusion of Separation*, a later series. And then, in the *Worldline Schreiber* canvases, the curvilinear and the rectilinear share the surface equally, each prompting the other to display its liveliest possibilities. Giving prominence to bold lines and angled planes, *Worldline Schreiber # 2* is the most architectural of these paintings; with the salience of its curves, *#3* implies orbits and inspires thoughts of time's recurrent patterns. In *Worldline Schreiber #4* light and dark exchange roles, ushering us into a night as luminous as the daylit infinities of the other paintings in the group.

Fintz has called her forms Platonic—an adjective with powerful connotations. Though Plato argued that every object or quality derives from a transcendent Idea or Form, we tend to use “Platonic” to refer to the basics of plane geometry: circles, squares, triangles. Residing in the realm of thought, these elemental forms are understood as timeless, stable, and therefore real to Plato in a way that the ever-changing things of ordinary life were not. His philosophical heirs have maintained this invidious distinction down to the present. It pervades our culture, leading us to believe, not always consciously, that the flow of our experience is somehow secondary, that its incidents and even its surprises are just distractions from timeless realities. Fintz's *Worldline Schreiber* paintings owe their power to the challenges they put to this hierarchy of form and meaning.

The artist deploys her rhomboids and lozenges in grids; circles appear in hexagonal configurations. Intersecting, these patterns call for adjustments. Answering that call, Fintz generates the angles and arcs that surge and curve across her pictorial fields. As grandly Platonic as they are, the underlying regularities of a *Worldline Schreiber* never freeze it into static state. Released from the stasis of the absolute, Fintz's forms are free to trace their own paths—their worldlines—through a painting's universe. Shades of white and blue modulate slightly. Deleted lines are visible, sometimes, as ghostly penitenti. Caught up in these subtleties, we sense that the pictorial contingencies, the dazzling improvisations, of the *Worldline Schreiber* paintings are

just as real—signify as much—as the transcendent premises from which they emerge. Or perhaps they are more significant.

After all, the transcendent is imaginable only from a personal perspective. And thoughts of timelessness provide no escape from temporality. Hence the worldline that traces each person's unique passage through time and space. Fintz has noted that, in Hindu tradition, white is the color of the ground of being. As manifold images arise from the artist's fields of white, universal being in its all-encompassing generality takes on specific and thereby vital form. The *Worldline Schreiber* paintings are revelatory. Charging inorganic geometries with the richness of personal experience, they hold up metaphorical mirrors to the shifting complexities and clarities of our individual lives.