

**Linda Levit, Russell Maltz  
Schmidt, Inc.  
489 Broome St., through Jan. 18**

Linda Levit, like Judith Murray, paints within a deliberately limited idiom. Yet because each of her paintings is hand-demarked — no masking tape — each is different in its spatial effects.

Levit's one-color saturated canvases are striated by bars (two usually) of contrasting colors. They begin at the left and end before they reach the right. The brushiness and imprecision of Levit's hand makes the bars substantial things rather than forces like Barnett Newman zip lines. They're like steps or steppes in landscapes stacked Oriental fashion.

Levit's colors and titles evoke the Middle East and Africa. One thinks of Diebenkorn in Levit's restrictiveness, though she alludes to a wider world. Like him she knows that working a single terrain can yield ample painting situations.

Russell Maltz' patented shape looks like a spectral fan or a filled-in cobweb — but with a more elegant presence. There are several drawings of this form, and it is also realized in a wood and masonite sculpture.

A new establishment, Schmidt, Inc., is a combination gallery and coffee bar, containing many classy touches in addition to this formalist art. A plush red carpet on which you set foot at the door seems to lead on for miles, with the art like distant apparitions. I hope the sense of vastness can be conquered. If the works were physically closer, they would be seen in their best light.