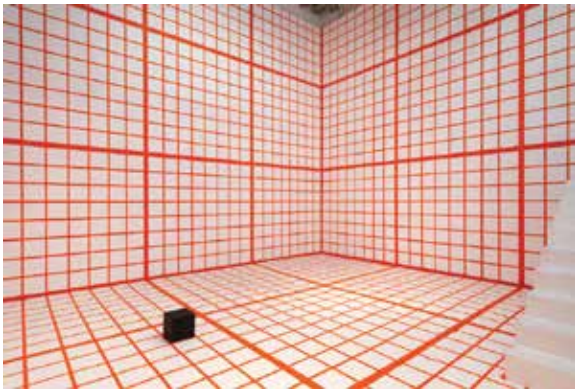


*Review: Channa Horwitz's work goes off the common grid*

Mizota, Sharon

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Channa Horwitz, "Orange Grid," 2013. (Robert Wedemeyer / Francois Ghebaly Gallery)

I had just been standing in Channa Horwitz's orange gridded room when I received an email announcing that she had died. Although I didn't know her, the experience was a bit vertiginous, not unlike the sensation of standing in the sunken space at François Ghebaly Gallery.

Horwitz had painted the walls and floor in a pattern of bright orange grid lines. Punctuated only with a single black cube — the height and width of a single square — it is now a kind of non-space where the actual contours of the room begin to dissolve.

Horwitz, who was 80, had been working with orange grid paper since the 1960s. She used it as the underlying structure for incredibly lush and varied drawings driven by a highly systematic process in the mode of conceptual artist Sol Lewitt.

But her work was also prescient, evoking the malleable spaces of digital animation, in which anything becomes possible within a highly regimented grid of pixels. For what is a digital display if not a grid through which light and colors move in endless variations? By extending her grid into our space, Horwitz seemed to encourage us to become the drawing ourselves.

She also provided a guiding example in a mural on the exterior of the gallery. The apparent jumble of overlapping circles and squares — in black, white and orange of course — actually follows a lovely internal logic, aligning perfectly with the grid while seeming perfectly off-kilter.