

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

Edna Andrade

Astrologer's Garden | May 13 - June 27, 2015

By Marina Isgro

In the 1970s, Edna Andrade traded in her involvement with the vertigo of Op art for a more restrained exploration of geometry. In this, she recast the movement's emphasis on perceptual uncertainty into highly abstract landscapes and still lifes that hover between the terrestrial and the cosmic.

The stars of her current exhibition, *Astrologer's Garden*, are a group of canvases from the 1980s and early '90s that explore the semantic potential of simple geometry: how a circle can stand for the eye of a telescope or the body of a meteor, a sine wave for a trail of smoke or a mountain ridge. The spare pyramids and empty steps of the titular painting (from 1988)

could be a de Chirico cityscape redrawn in a Bauhaus workshop, while the pastel classicism of *Acropolis*, 1993, finds Andrade searching for the minimum of planes that make a flat form coalesce into an architectural volume. In earlier, more purely abstract works such as *Moongate A*, 1966, shapes in shades of gray hover between foreground and background, as if beaming in from other universes. Incorporating references to the Jantar Mantar observatory, Native American patterns, and Buckminster Fuller's utopian domes, the works are animated by an Aby Warburg-like impulse to find connections among disparate times and places.

A strong selection of drawings and small-scale paintings rounds out this show. Here, Andrade's obsessive, meticulously constructed patterns call to mind her time as a professor at the Philadelphia College of Art. These are satisfying formal puzzles in which each square and half circle snaps perfectly together, producing a precision at the service of a dizzying ambiguity.



Edna Andrade, *Moongate A*, 1966
acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60"