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Jean Linder
55 MERCER GALLERY

The signs of struggle so conspicuously absent in Wilke's relaxed work are discernible in the tougher polyethylene sculptures of Jean Linder. In spite of the unfortunate plastics industry odor which permeated her Mercer Street exhibition space, in spite of too much plastic sculpture in the '60s, and the whole industrial SoHo ambiance in which her work is situated, she managed to state her sculptural ideas with force and clarity. No innovator, but a solid former (vacuum-former) of materials she turns transparent vinyl into soft and fairly firm configurations of varying density, texture, and translucency. All the works are based on an approximately 2' x 4' module because of the dimensions of her equipment. She stitches her sheets or mounds of smooth or bumpy vinyl together into huge pillows, bags, wall hangings, carpets, or blankets which she drapes from wall to floor. The reddish orange stitching and beadwork threads through the vinyl like blood vessels binding it together, articulating it, and emphasizing the bilateral symmetry of her form world. The result is a protoplasmic sense of life, as though we were seeing through the bodies of oversized jellyfish to the wall or floor of a sea bed. Linder's imagery is, like Wilke's, female, though not nearly so overtly. Her baggy, breast-like protrusions and oval slit or blunted saclike shapes often outlined in heavy tubes of colored plastic beading, hint at female sexual organ iconography, but subvert it to purely formal ends. Her achievement seems to lie in having been able to make meaningful art out of materials and ideas that have come to seem only too trite.

—April Kingsley