

# ARTFORUM

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Sylvia Stone

ANDRE EMMERICH DOWNTOWN

At the extreme end of the spectrum—as far away from naturalism as you can get—is the geometric abstraction of Sylvia Stone's glassy green and smoky gray Plexiglas sculptures on view at the Andre Emmerich Gallery in Soho—Crystal Palace and Another Place. These works, plus two smaller pieces, demonstrate some of the problems presented by the contemporary need for "truth to materials." Stone is working in a transparent material, but she seems to be caught in a dilemma between her love of Plexiglas for its own sake and the fact that she utilizes it to form solid, planar shapes which we are accustomed to seeing opaquely, as we see the shapes of David Smith, Alexander Lieberman, and Anthony Caro, from which her forms clearly devolve. She has nevertheless produced work that is sumptuous in its materiality. It parallels the recent large tinted glass sculptures of Larry Bell in this respect, but Bell's work has an icy austerity, an almost mystical presence, that Stone's playful geometricity and airiness do not share. She pits the hard rectilinearity of squared-off shapes and corners against enormous curvilinear arcs. The swiftly moving snap of her edges mitigates against the blurry passivity of her transparent planes. She fails to exploit the reflectivity of her material to any structural advantage the way Larry Bell, for example, utilizes reflections to multiply his units optically and creates spatial ambiguity of a high order. Bell's work is determinedly architectonic; Sylvia Stone's playful extensions and propped units seem almost casual and arbitrary by comparison. Perhaps one element that functions in a novel way is the linear activity of her darkened edges, at times granted freely and not as a function of Constructivist interplay.

—April Kingsley