

METRO PICTURES

Handy, Ellen. "Renée Daniels," *Arts Magazine* (January 1986).



RENÉ DANIELS

It is not typical or fashionable practice to attempt to praise an artist with words like "unassuming," yet that can be meant as praise, especially when it is a quality so refreshingly unusual. René Daniels' paintings are that. They are also skillful and interesting.

They are simple and fairly abstract while still entirely representational. Many incorporate the motif of what looks like a three-paneled screen (or an oddly perspectival rendering of a room) hung with pictures. The interest is as much in the play of two and three represented dimensions, the color, the composition and design as it is in the idea of paintings of paintings.

These paintings seem to be an essay on a theme rather than anything grander. They represent a little body of work that is a recent interest of the artist's. But Daniels has not given up figurative work, so these pictures could be seen as sort of an aside, a self-contained set of variations.

The canvases are pleasant and rather calm. *Painting on the Missing Bosch Painting of the Flood* shows us three pictures hung on a narrow screen with a watery shimmer on the floor, a nice touch. One of two paintings called *Painting on Unknown Languages* is composed of what seems to be a multitude of little windows rather than paintings. It struck me that these canvases would be very suitable for hanging in waiting rooms and public spaces.

The disadvantage of these paintings of Daniels' is that their simplicity doesn't quite suffice. There is no progression, no evolution in the variations, and ultimately only modest achievement. (Metro Pictures, November 2-30)