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ART IN REVIEW

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John Zinsser David Maisel

*Von Lintel Gallery
555 West 25th Street, Chelsea
Through July 12*

Using only two colors but working them to gorgeous effects, John Zinsser has produced a suite of non-objective paintings, each 19 by 17 inches, that are loosely based on the 1960's heritage of Abstract Expressionism. He calls them duochromes because they have a ground layer of enamel on top of which he paints in oil. With the lustrous enamel often showing through in streaks and patches, he lays on the oil by different means: brushes, squeegees, a sharp instrument, a palette knife.

In "Heaven and the Earth," broad horizontal bands of gold are brushed thinly over a radiant orange ground; in three related paintings titled "The Face of the Deep," narrow lines of white light are scratched across surfaces of brilliantly nuanced blue. If these paintings are a lot about paint for paint's sake, they are not without spiritual associations, too — hence their bib-

lical titles and the show's overall title, "Bible Studies." Altogether, the phrase tour de force applies.

In "The Lake Project Photographs," in another room of the gallery, David Maisel also creates abstract imagery, with the aid of a camera and a very cooperative stretch of arid land called Owens Valley in southeastern California. Over decades the diversion of water from its river and lake to the Los Angeles Aqueduct has left an exposed dry salt flat from which emanates a continuous cloud of toxic particles.

Recent attempts by the Environmental Protection Agency to control the spread by flooding the area has enhanced the already spectacular aerial views of the valley; Mr. Maisel, noted for his focus on environmental destruction, has been there with his camera. His pictures of erosion, desiccation and other forms of geologic mayhem that are only too photogenic have the force of abstract paintings. They give pleasure despite the horrendous facts that lie behind them.

GRACE GLUECK