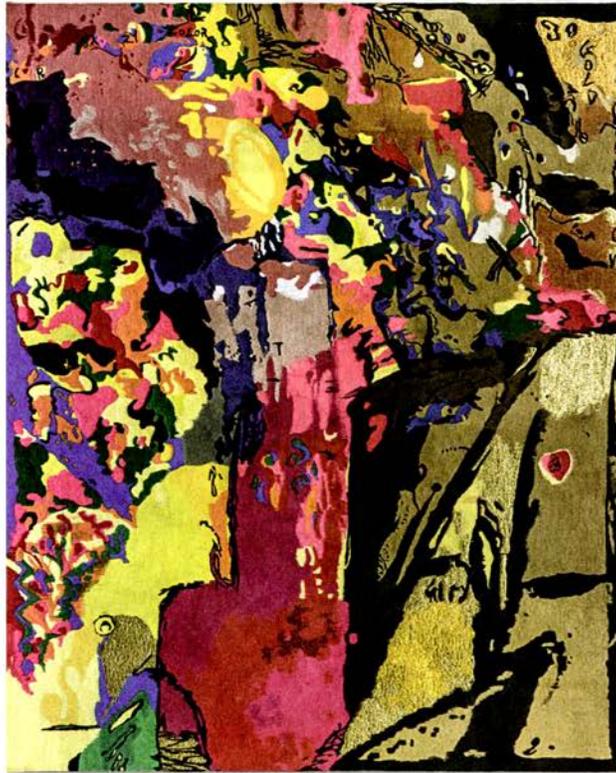


## Galleries



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND BORTOLAMI, NEW YORK

### IVAN MORLEY

Through Feb. 18. Bortolami, 520 West 20th Street, Manhattan; 212-727-2050, [bortolamigallery.com](http://bortolamigallery.com).

Full of colorful intricacies, Ivan Morley's paintings can seem almost demonic in their devotion to labor-intensive techniques, expanses of small shapes and unusual materials and processes, including embroidery, mother-of-pearl, reverse glass and tooled leather. He is at his most overheated in the Bortolami gallery's back space, which displays four earlier paintings that also indicate his affinity for various forms of Americana: horror comics, story-book illustration and 1970s psychedelia.

In the front space, Mr. Morley's latest paintings suggest that these tendencies have been tempered, or even outgrown. But who knows? Mr. Morley clearly likes to operate on several fronts at once. These new efforts are sparkling abstractions, the best of which have been made by the artist on an embroidery machine. Lush and gorgeous, their teeming biomorphic shapes are given density by richly colored threads (including metallic) and evoke nonspecific mixes of cartoons, cursive writing and views through microscopes. A dual personality results: The resemblance to tapestries is slightly archaic; the anarchic, abstract profusion seems completely of the moment. It is worth noting that the Abstract Expressionist Clyfford Still is paid homage in "Logo," one of the earlier works here.

Mr. Morley provides a tutorial

about paintings as objects in four new works using the same composition but rendered in different materials. The embroidered version and the one on stitched-together tooled leather are the most rewarding in completely different ways. The first is opulent; the second is tough, almost battle-ready. Both newly reiterate the concentrated visual life that is essential to painting.

ROBERTA SMITH