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BY MICHAEL BRENSON

David Row

John Good Gallery
532 Broadway (near Spring Street)
Through March 23

David Row is trying to make abstract paintings that will have the sensuousness of, let's say, David Reed's work but also an even greater degree of self-consciousness. In his new paintings — the smallest is 77 by

76 inches, the largest, 91 by 164 inches — Mr. Row works with matte surfaces and both muted and high-pitched colors.

All the paintings consist of several canvases, each one a different size. In each, there are lines suggesting huge parabolas. Sometimes the sweeping curves continue from one canvas into the next. More often the effect is one of discontinuity and incompleteness. A fluid, even cosmic, movement seems well under way within a canvas yet already broken by the edge or by the different movement in an adjacent canvas. The discontinuity is reinforced by the textures, which seem like old walls whose paint has been scratched or has begun to peel away. The problem here is that the emotional needs and intellectual demands within these paintings work against each other, almost canceling each other out.

These paintings will not discourage any one who believes Mr. Row is a painter to watch, but the conceptual, self-conscious side of the work clearly wins the day.