

ART VIEW

Siri
Berg's
Ten
Years

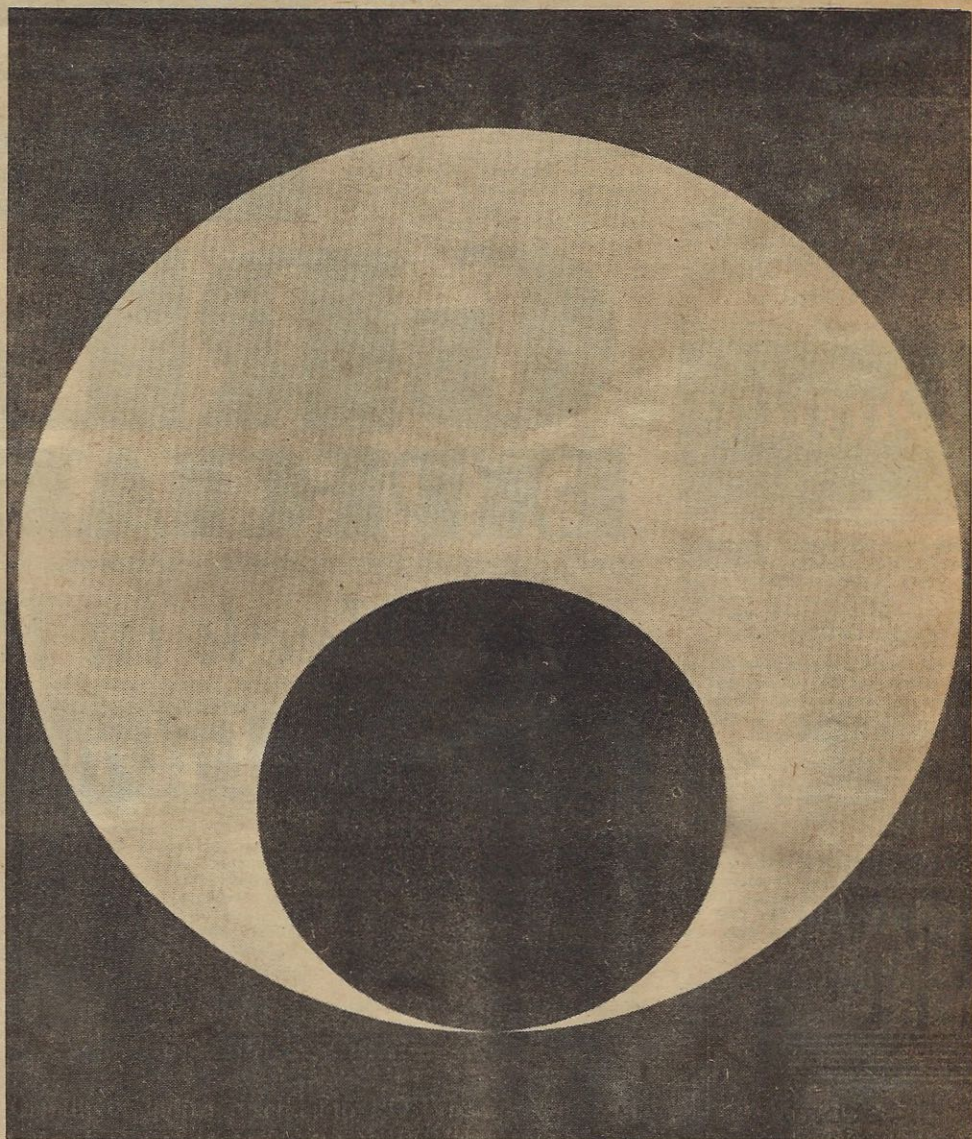
By PALMER PORONER

Two well-known women artists are holding major exhibits this week, one uptown and one downtown, Miriam Schapiro at both Lerner-Heller and Barbara Gladstone, and Siri Berg at Ward-Nasse Gallery, 131 Prince Street in Soho.

Siri Berg waited until her art was mature before beginning to exhibit in 1970. An artist's first exhibited works rarely stand up with those ten years later. Siri Berg's work shows variety, along with consistent evolution, from the earliest works where the color was modulated, on to flat-painted canvases of brilliant color, to white lines on black employing patterns, to the purist white on white, also with grids, to the large, single images of the circle, and finally to using the 'environmental box.' All this time, the form also evolved, though always from the same base, as the title indicates: "Aspects of the Circle; Paintings of the Seventies."

A Fascinating Progression

One can follow the progress in Siri Berg's thinking, whether it be in color, handling of paint (which moved from oils to acrylic), to that of form. One views clockwise, beginning at the left, the work of 1970 to that of 1979 on the right in this huge gallery. The



SIRI BERG'S "Bottom Circles," 60" x 48", first exhibited in 1970 at East Hampton Gallery, NYC, also appeared in two scenes of the film, "The Eyes of Laura Mars." The painting is currently showing at Ward-Nasse.

discipline and control is evident, for the direction of the work never weavers. The sheer inventiveness becomes apparent gradually, for technique is not obvious.

Every time Berg had need of new materials and means, she created them to her uses. The new paint handling of many coats of flat paint, the raised or indented circle, the environmental plastic box, the two and the three-panel division of the same motif, the seven panel 'La Ronde'

after Arthur Schnitzler, all form a basis for our understanding the genius of Siri Berg and of what all artists are trying to achieve.

This is only the tip of the iceberg if one does not realize the meditation that is behind all this. Berg has been on an ongoing search for pure color and then pure form. She has been involved with the mysticism of yin and yang, the view of life of Schnitzler, the poetic impulses of W.B. Yeats and

others. Hers is a rich personality derived from her Swedish origin, her European formation, and her American maturity, a personality of many facets, with tremendous vigor, yet always having a sense of control.