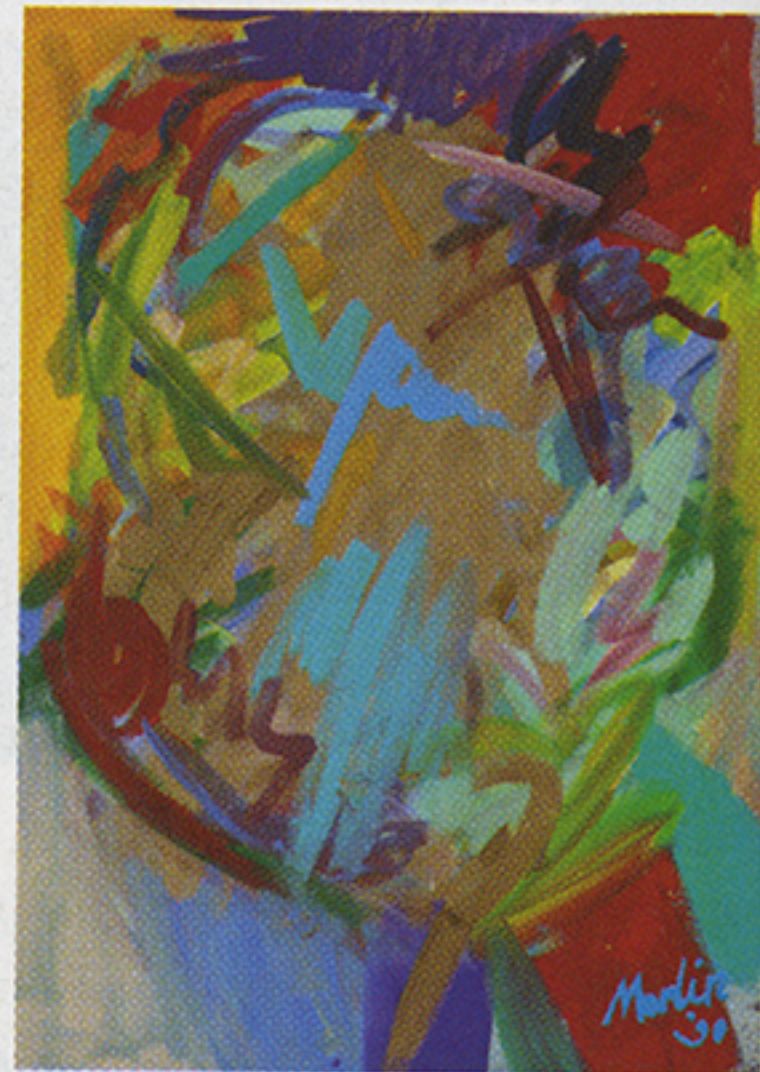


## LAURA OWENS

Merlin Carpenter (*Overduin and Kite, Los Angeles*) In the 1969 film adaptation of Terry Southern's satirical novel *The Magic Christian*, Sir Guy Grand and his son Youngman Grand (played by Peter Sellers and Ringo Starr, respectively) work to reveal the avarice of the material world through humor, absurdist gesture, and hallucinatory Dada-like pranks. Likewise, Merlin Carpenter (whose name could be translated as "Magic Christian") mounted an exhibition in LA this year that was a tonic for every fatty cell that has accumulated within the obese corpus of painting. Like Sir Guy Grand or a wicked and unorthodox Zen master, Carpenter created a slim koan of an exhibition that activated a spiral of thought and awareness of structure that didn't allow the viewer to don the usual cloak of invisibility within the gallery but instead sparked an undeniable self-consciousness, unveiling the passive posture that we routinely relax into while walking through a show.



Merlin Carpenter, *1990 Repainted 1*, 2010, oil on linen, 39½ x 27½".