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raises the difficult issue of painted sculpture, and it suggests the multitude of ways sculptors use color.

For example, color can be brought in to establish planes or defy gravity (Judy Pfaff); to simplify form and give it symbolic meaning (Melvin Edwards); to create a sense of effortless, flowing lightness (George Sugarman); to establish an illusion of interior illumination (Steve Keister); to create a sense of flowering, jumpy movement that disguises the materials and its actual mass (Nancy Graves); to anchor separated forms (David Winter, whose sculptural drawing in space is strung across the gallery and on display only through Feb. 20), and to create a sense of baroque three-dimensionality (John Chamberlain).

Beyond its informative nature and the relative success of a number of individual pieces, however, the exhibition is a mistake in this space. For one thing, the huge atrium, with its gray granite floor and gray limestone wall, could not be more inhospitable to painted sculpture. In this cool yet busy and almost scaleless environment, painted sculpture becomes frilly to the point where its integrity is largely lost. The sculpture in this show seems homeless. In the presence of the homeless men and women who now depend upon the atrium for refuge, the sculptures make everything about the atrium seem out of place.

The show does not do sculpture a favor. One of the pervasive assertions about modern sculpture is that it needed modern painting to liberate it. It can be argued that as long as sculpture works within the traditions of painting it almost asks for second-class status. Most of the sculpture in this show comes out of the pictorial tradition of collage. When painted, it tends to become doubly pictorial. Even the works of Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Edwards, who are highly attuned to issues of mass and movement, cannot retain their sculptural integrity here. The show makes sculpture itself seem slight. Polychrome sculpture is a big and interesting issue, and it is worth taking up, but the exhibition should go beyond metal, and it needs a real museum space.

'Painted Forms: Recent Metal Sculpture'

*Whitney Museum of American Art
at Philip Morris
120 Park Avenue (at 42d Street)
Through December 1991*

In the last couple of years, the Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris has performed a valuable service in calling attention to materials, artists or issues that have been somewhat outside the interest of New York galleries and museums. "Painted Forms: Recent Metal Sculpture," installed almost entirely in Philip Morris's atrium, brings together a broad selection of polychrome metal sculpture that hardly anyone besides Josephine Gear, the branch director, would have realized was a category of work. The strengths of the exhibition are that it