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Works that invite you to dive in

Long before Kate Bright began to paint, many artists discovered that the surface of water offers a complex subject open to varied interpretations. The impressionists, especially Claude Monet, were particularly successful in exploiting the sensuousness of reflective, rippling water.

Bright, a British artist having her first American solo show, at the Locks Gallery, isn't technically an impressionist, but the aqueous effects she creates through a novel technique imbue her water paintings with exceptional vitality and sparkle.

The nine paintings at Locks, the largest of which is six by nearly eight feet, combine acrylic pigment with resin. Through a palette of baby blue, ochre, pale green, brown and black, they re-create the effects of severely distorted reflections.

The paintings might look improvised, but they're deliberately marked. The resinous finish not only provides a shiny surface that reinforces the illusion but, more important, generates considerable movement.

As a result, one's eyes are forced into continuous scanning, just as they are when one is looking at real water. Bright's achievement is more than simple illusion; she produces a high degree of presence that's impossible to miss.

Locks Gallery, 600 Washington Square South. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. Through May 13. 215-629-1000 or www.locksgallery.com.



Regent's Park (November), 2004, acrylic and resin on canvas, 84 x 60 inches

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