

June 2, 2006

The Philadelphia Inquirer

To see her is to know her; the work has a recognizable style.

An artist of undiminished power

By Edith Newhall
FOR THE INQUIRER

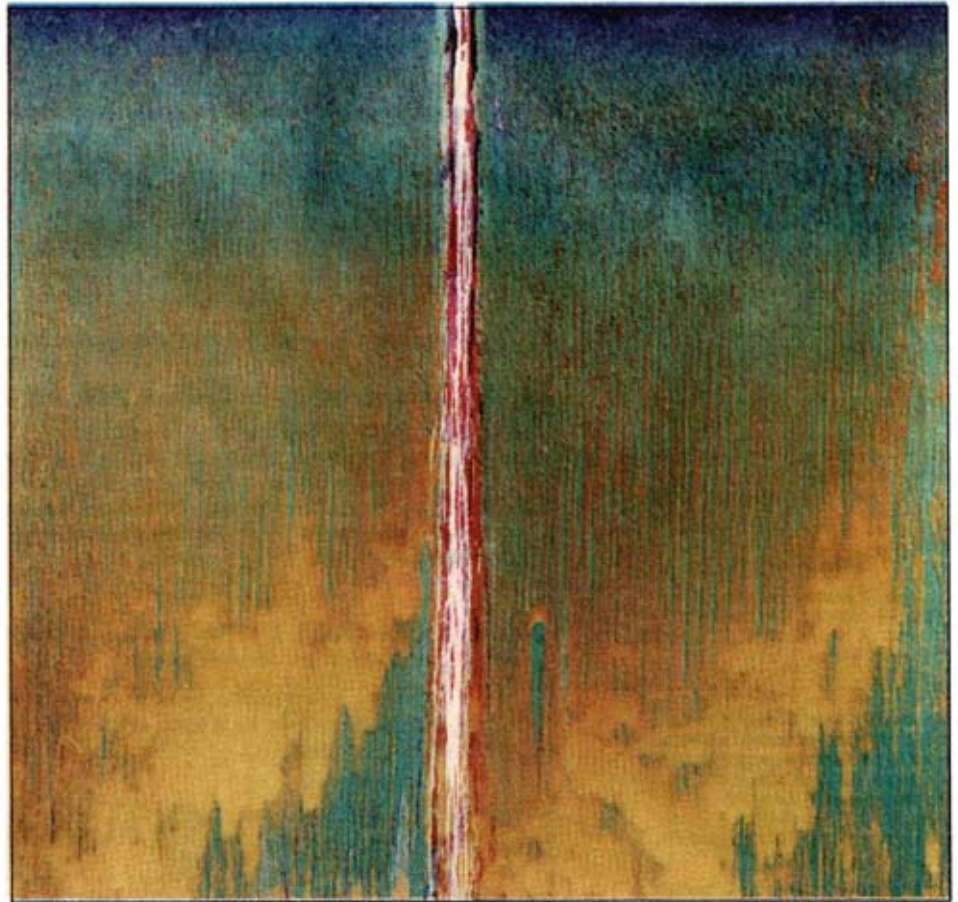
Some artists like to jettison a signature style soon after they've acquired it. All too often, though, the later work is less popular — and not as strong — as the work that preceded it.

Pat Steir, on the other hand, whose new and recent paintings are on view at the Locks Gallery, has hewed fairly closely to a way of painting she developed in the late 1980s, when she began her "Waterfall" series, dripping paint down her canvases in the manner of cascading water. Her abstract paintings have changed over the last 20 or so years, but they have always been recognizably hers, and they continue to exert the same powerful impact.

Steir's paintings are not tidy, but they are elegant in the way that minimal, abstract, slightly organic paintings — say those of Agnes Martin or Brice Marden — can be.

Her new work, represented here by 12 large paintings made between 1999 and this year, suggest the glittery, diffused atmosphere of outer space but have a central stripe that brings to mind Barnett Newman's "zips."

I happen to prefer Steir's drippier, more contrasty paintings that look like gigantic, wide Chinese scroll paintings — two of which are in this show. But these new works have an inner glow that made me think of Rothko. And to be simultaneously, but only vaguely, reminded of Newman and Rothko is an unexpected pleasure.



"Molly's Summer Moon Beam" is among recent paintings by Pat Steir at the Locks Gallery.

Locks Gallery, 600 Washington Square South, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays.
Information: 215-629-1000 or <http://info@locksgallery.com>. Through June 17.



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