

Pat Steir paints meditative ‘Waterfalls’

By *Anita Katz*

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COURTESY PAT STEIR

Evocative abstracts by Pat Steir, including “Triptych Dragon,” are on view at Meyerovich Gallery.

Contemporary artist Pat Steir creates cascades of color. She starts by carefully determining hues she will use and by dripping and pouring paint onto mapped-out surfaces. Then she lets the workings of her medium and the results of accident impress and surprise her.

Based in New York City and known for decades for her meditative abstracts, Steir is the subject of a solo show, “Pat Steirs: Waterfalls,” at Meyerovich Gallery in The City.

While containing some of the essence of abstract expressionism, Steir’s paintings and prints do not put forth personal statements or passions, but rather reflect a Zen-like aim to rid the mind of a driving sense of self. Large-scale monoprints, of oil paint and other media on silkscreen, make up much of the exhibit.

With dripping lines of color, these soul scapes suggest psychological states or natural subjects that have a mystique to them, such as waterfalls or seas. After choosing her color scheme and dividing the picture

into strips or hemispheres, Steir lets the paint take charge. “Gravity makes the image,” she has said of how her process unfolds.

The centerpiece attraction is “Triptych Dragon” (2008), a 72-by-72-inch monoprint with hand-coloring. Steir partitioned the work into three segments, each dominated by red, yellow or blue. Together, they create a totality of primary colors and a portrait of wholeness.

“Untitled 20” (2006, 48 by 34.5 inches), a hand-painted blue-on-blue monoprint with oil-based paint on a screen-print, features dripping forms that collectively might depict an ocean, or a nighttime sky, or something deep within the mind. Slightly above the midway mark, a small group of orange dots suggests a complementary presence.

In “Kangaroo” (2013, 70 by 36 inches), a monoprint with hand-coloring on silkscreen, Steir has split the picture into halves. One contains a blue-violet streak; one contains a red streak. A yellow stripe separates them, while a backdrop of drizzling white, resembling rain streaming down a window, unites the sections.

Steir, who began her career in the 1960s, became friends with artist Sol LeWitt, whose conceptual and process-oriented methods inspired her, and with musician (and printmaker) John Cage, whose views on roles played by chance also impressed her. She also was influenced by poetry and Asian philosophies, including Daoism. Her works have been featured in more than 150 solo exhibits around the globe, and included in many U.S. museum collections.

IF YOU GO

Pat Steir: Waterfalls

Where: Meyerovich Gallery 251 Post St., Suite 400, S.F.

When: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays-Fridays, 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturdays; closes Nov. 10

Admission: Free

Contact: (415) 421-7171, www.meyerovich.com

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