

GAGOSIAN

Pat Steir: Paintings, Part II at Gagosian Rome



Pat Steir, *Winter Daylight*, 2021–22, oil on canvas, 108 × 108 inches (274.3 × 274.3 cm) © Pat Steir.
Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein

ROME, June 21, 2022—Gagosian is pleased to announce *Pat Steir: Paintings, Part II*, to conclude the summer season in Rome. Focused around a suite of tall and majestic paintings, the gallery has been entirely rehung with the artist’s collaboration to create new dialogues between works from different recent series.

In 1969, while completing his final historic series of paintings, Barnett Newman wrote, “Why give in to these purists and formalists who have put a mortgage on red, yellow, and blue, transforming these colors into an idea that destroys them as colors? I had, therefore, the double incentive of using these colors to express what I wanted to do—of making these colors expressive rather than didactic and of freeing them from the mortgage. Why should anybody be afraid of red, yellow, and blue?”

Newman’s provocation riffed on the title of Edward Albee’s controversial play *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, an attack on the false optimism and myopic confidence of modern society. In his version, Newman raised enduring questions about the past and future of painting, responding to the earlier iconoclastic gestures of Aleksandr Rodchenko and Piet Mondrian as well as the climate of sober minimalism that had emerged in America, from the deathly late works of Ad Reinhardt and Mark Rothko to the black paintings of Frank Stella. Subsequently across time, painters such as Brice Marden, Philip Taaffe, Kerry James Marshall, and others have been moved to respond to Newman in highly individuated ways with works that reaffirm the vitality of their medium. Steir adds her own bold contribution to this painterly discourse with *Red Pour*, *Yellow Pour*, and *Blue Pour* (all 2022), a suite of three identically sized paintings. In liberating a stream of vivid primary color in a single gesture from the top edge down the center of each somber, blackened canvas, she performs

a compositional chance operation that fuses ascetic restraint with unashamed expressiveness. This productive tension creates a lyric response that, though elegiac, is charged with life and its contingencies. Pat Steir is not afraid.

Pat Steir was born in 1940 in Newark, New Jersey, and lives and works in New York. Collections include Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris; Musée du Louvre, Paris; Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland; Tate Modern, London; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC. Solo museum exhibitions include Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1997; 2010–11); *D'acqua e d'aria: Pat Steir, opere dal 1986 al 2003*, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome (2003); *Silent Secret Waterfalls: The Barnes Series*, Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia (2019); *Color Wheel*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC (2019–21); and Long Museum West Bund, Shanghai (2021–22).

#PatSteir

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Paintings, Part II

June 21–September 3, 2022

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