

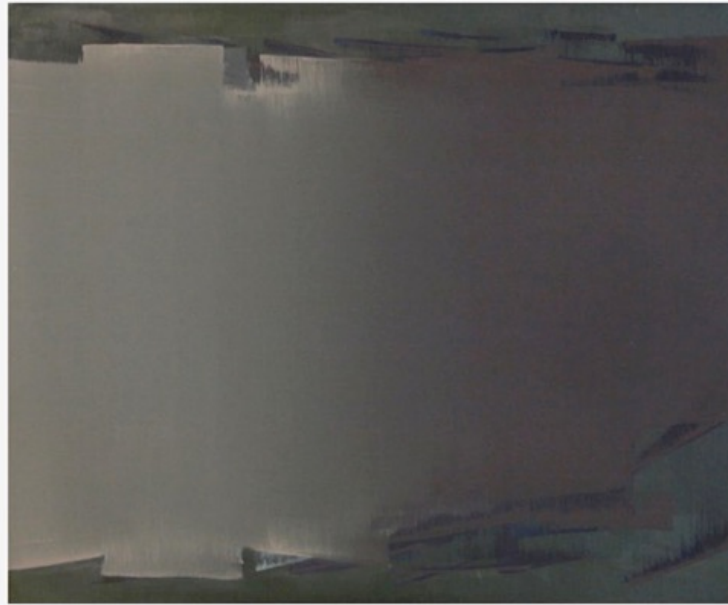


CULTURE MONSTER
ALL ARTS, ALL THE TIME

CRITIC'S CHOICE

Art review: The sensual intelligence of Nancy Haynes

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"referent for departure" by Nancy Haynes, at George Lawson Gallery (Courtesy George Lawson Gallery / October 22, 2012)

By Leah Ollman

October 22, 2012 | 4:22 p.m.

Nancy Haynes carries the torch of postwar abstraction into the present with breathtaking sensual intelligence. Her nine recent paintings at George Lawson are modestly scaled (the largest is 28 x 34 inches), intimate and luminous. Most of each canvas is occupied by a chromatic or tonal progression, a broad band in which one color morphs into another, or a light shade grows dense and dark. These smooth, meticulous gradations are bordered, top and bottom, by a sort of behind-the-scenes peek at the seamless illusion: discrete, short brushstrokes that feather off quickly.

With just a few basic ingredients, Haynes (who divides her time between Brooklyn and Colorado) stages a complex interplay between unlike conditions. Space alternates between flat and infinitely deep. Handling of the paint varies between raw immediacy and a more refined illusionism. Warm tones shift to cool. Restlessness neighbors tranquility. Staccato beats of *now* are complemented by sustained notes of *always*. The doing rubs up against the done.

With the exception of a few works featuring electric aqua, Haynes's palette is largely subdued—slate, taupe, gray, green and spare hints of purple. In certain passages, positive and negative oscillate with the strange, concentrated strength of a solarized photograph. Rothko and Newman may come to mind when considering Haynes's work, but only fleetingly. These paintings have an integrity and presence all their own, a quality that might be called optical soul.

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George Lawson Gallery, 8564 Washington Blvd., Culver City, (310) 837-6900, through Nov. 10. Closed Sunday and Monday. www.georgelawsongallery.com

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