

# The Philadelphia Inquirer

## Galleries: Moore at Locks

By Edith Newhall, For The Inquirer  
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“*Holiday*” (2013), oil on canvas, by John Moore, whose main subject is the old Globe Dye Works in Philadelphia

The former Globe Dye Works, in the Frankford section of Philadelphia, is the main subject of John Moore’s recent paintings at Locks Gallery. It is where he has his studio, and his affection for this restored Civil War-era factory, which operated from 1865 to 2005, is palpable in these quiet elegies for the city’s industrial past. As in his previous paintings, Moore arranges the disparate parts of his compositions so seamlessly that you could easily miss his inventions.

Several paintings of the Globe Dye Works’ cavernous interiors capture the building’s inherent mysteries with seemingly few interventions by Moore. The history of the building and the history of the painting coexist in these works. In *Fire Door* (2014), for example, a metal door with a worn, mottled patina is shown pulled aside to reveal a view into the heart of the building, its checkerboard linoleum floor the only possible fiction. Here, Moore seems to be referencing Vermeer’s painting *The Love Letter*, but the scale of the painting and its large rectangular panels of dark red and orange and deep violet blue in the foreground also bring Barnett Newman to mind (the narrow

section of the interior view functioning like Newman’s zip).

When Moore introduces a more obvious fiction, he reminds me of de Chirico or Alfred Hitchcock, as in *Holiday* (2013), which depicts the improbably embellished façade of a house as supposedly seen through the windows of his Frankford studio. There’s a towering chimney to the left, and a chain dangles from his studio window like a watch fob. A foreboding purple sky sets off the cheerful pink stucco of the building “across the street.”

This is a beautiful body of work that describes Philadelphia at its somber best.

Locks Gallery, 600 Washington Square South, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Tuesdays through Saturdays. 215-629-1000 or [www.locksgallery.com](http://www.locksgallery.com).  
Through Saturday.

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