



Pat Steir, *Paris Waterfall*, 1990, oil on canvas, 98 x 88 1/4 inches

PAT STEIR

Snow and Waterfall

Tuesday, April 4 – Friday, May 12, 2023

Locks Gallery is pleased to present ***Snow and Waterfall***, an exhibition of works from Pat Steir's acclaimed *Waterfall* series and related works. This marks the artist's seventh solo show with the gallery and is accompanied by a catalog featuring essays by Carter Ratcliff and Lynne Tillman. Spanning over four decades of her career, this exhibition will occupy the first and second floors of the gallery.

Pat Steir is a leading figure in contemporary painting, known for her inventive process and lyrical use of scale and color. Steir's mature process was developed in the 1980s with her *Waterfall* paintings, by way of her associations with Conceptual Art, Minimalism and a close study of Eastern painting. Through rigorous and wide-ranging material experimentations, Steir has continued to push the conceptual bounds of painting. In the mid-2000s, she created her 'Split' paintings, which are indebted to, but also slyly subvert the hard-edged, color field abstractions of her predecessors Barnett Newman and Ellsworth Kelly. A selection of these works, which explore the characteristics of pigments and fluidity, and showcase her continued mastery of the chemistry of oil paints, will be on view on the second floor of the gallery.

For nearly half a century, Steir has been exploring water landscapes both as literal material representations and through their poetic possibilities. This selection of works spans the beginning of her *Waterfall* series in the 1980s, to her present-day explorations of this motif. Immersive large-scale paintings like *Graphical Waterfall* (1990) are accompanied by more

intimate works such as *Lovely Red* (2000) and *Simone's Snow* (2001). The deep, receding space of *Paris Waterfall* (1990) is abruptly flattened by a syncopated, surface-level rhythm. Like the classical Chinese literati paintings that inspired the *Waterfall* series, these works are not simply reflections of physical landscapes, but an expression of the artist's inner world and commitment to process.

Even though her body of work is grounded in the history of art, aesthetics and Eastern philosophies, Steir's studio practice is essentially focused on the pure pleasure of material. She pours, splashes, flings and throws paint onto vertically hung un-stretched canvases, embracing "non-intention" as a conceptual backbone for her work. Broad, veiled swathes of paint are applied and then left to drip, with gravity and the inherent fluidity of the medium



Pat Steir, *Forest in Snow*, 2010, oil on canvas, 127 1/4 x 109 1/4 inches



taking over where Steir's gestures end. The resulting landscapes carve out a contemplative space, appealing to the immediacy of the senses, as in the lush, spare *Forest in Snow* (2010) and the riotous air of *Snowflake* (1995). The paradoxes between restraint and disorder, intention and chance, illusion and event, are a vital force in Steir's work. While her work has been a landmark in contemporary painting since the 1980s, this present collection takes on a fresh perspective. As water becomes an increasingly vulnerable resource, Steir's continued exploration of these themes commands another collective resource under threat — our embodied, uninterrupted attention.

Pat Steir was born in 1938 in Newark, New Jersey and currently lives and works in New York. She studied at Boston University and received her BFA from Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY in 1962. Steir is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship (1982), individual grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1973, 1976) and an honorary doctorate from Pratt Institute (1991). She is a founding board member of Printed Matter Inc. in New York City and the feminist journal Heresies. Her work is represented in major collections, including: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; The Museum of Modern Art, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY; The Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; The San Francisco Museum of Fine Arts, CA; de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Tate Gallery, London; Locks Gallery has represented the artist since 2006.