

of light and atmosphere. It hung opposite a 37-foot painting of aqueous blue bounded on either side by banks of red and silver. Standing up close, one felt completely immersed in a cascading waterscape. Recalling Color-Field precedents, *Blue River* stakes out new terrain within Steir's vocabulary of poured, dripped, thrown and splattered paint.

The artist's preoccupations with water, light and celestial phenomena—uncontrollable natural forces associated with perpetual cycles of time and motion, as well as with the sources and destruction of life—began with "The Moon and the Wave" series of 1986-87. In the late '80s, Steir began painting what became signature works—her waterfalls—applying to her practice a conceptualist approach that conflated medium and subject matter, abstraction and representation, figure and ground. The joy of her work lies in its simultaneous occupation of real and metaphysical realms, which is sourced as much in her surrender to the pulse of the universe as in the process of making art.

—Susan Harris

## Sol LeWitt at the Metropolitan Museum, Madison Square Park and PaceWildenstein

Specifics of site intruded on three recent installations by Sol LeWitt, underscoring the increasing sensuousness of his instruction-based art. "Sol LeWitt on the Roof: Splotches, Whirls and Twirls" occupies the Cantor Roof Garden at the Metropolitan

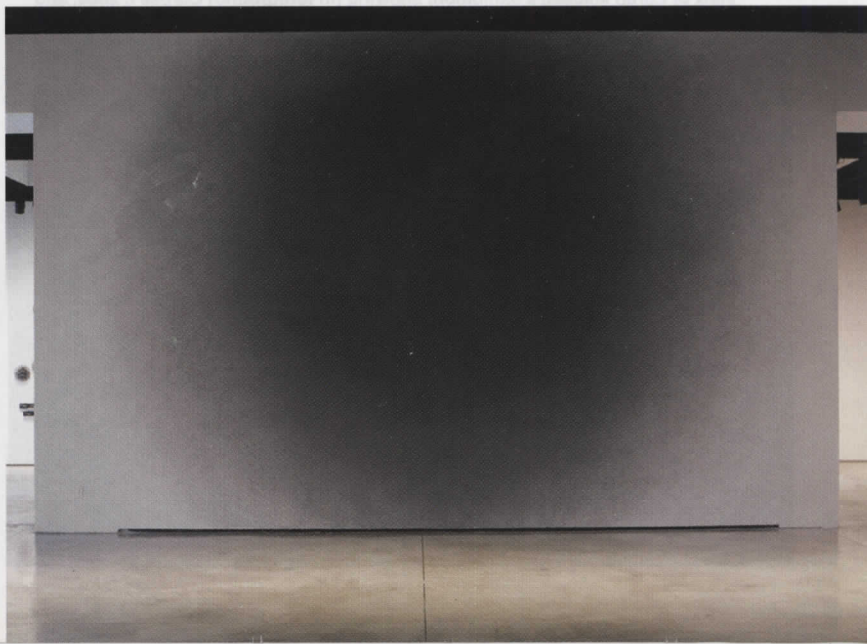
and includes the 9-by-32-foot *Wall Drawing #1152 Whirls and Twirls* (2005). Segmented bands made of seven stripes of equal width writhe and curl across a white ground, overlapping yet utterly flat, in unmodulated versions of the six primary and secondary hues. Three square air-ducts happen to pierce the frenzied design—a serendipitous reminder of the artist's earlier austere, grid-based oeuvre.

Five *Splotches*, three-dimensional works in slick, painted fiberglass, resemble vertically exaggerated stalagmites or mountain ranges and are designed, museum literature indicates, with the aid of a computer. The largest, *Splotch #15* (2005), is 12 feet tall; it and two others are painted in the same palette as the wall work, in flat patches that reiterate or abruptly cut across the mounting, diving topography. A husky black version and a slender white one reveal their forms unfettered by chroma. Placed on low, broad bases that remove them from arm's reach, they are agreeable, undemanding if slightly outlandish, and predictably complement the view of Central Park and the upward thrust of the surrounding skyline. They remain on view through October.

One hundred or so of LeWitt's concrete-block structures have been realized since 1982, mostly in Europe and the U.S. Under the auspices of the Madison Square Park Conservancy, two are installed in that midtown location through December. Dappled by the shadows of the oaks spreading overhead, the cubic, gray-bleached blocks of *Curved Wall with Towers* (2005) rise

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Sol LeWitt: *Wall Drawing #1167 Dark to light (scribbles)*, 2005, black pencil, 16 feet, 8 inches by 27 feet; at PaceWildenstein.



to a height of 14 feet along the sculpture's gently S-shaped 85-foot length. The wall is laid in four courses, each four units deep; the towers, four by four units in plan, are separated by intervals of the same size. The columns, variously angled along the curving length, echo the irregularly pitched pilasters on the facade of 11 Madison Ave., across the street. Similar in program and materials, *Circle with Towers* (2005), at 25 feet in diameter, might be a straight-laced, sandy version of the ornate south fountain a few dozen yards away. Both works reiterate the leisurely rhythms of the park's verdant walkways, and serve as additional seating for humans and pigeons.

Vastly unlike the architectonic, color-saturated wall works the artist's assistants installed at PaceWildenstein in 2002, two new works at the gallery conjured

shadows and fog. *Wall Drawing #1167 Dark to light (scribbles)* covered the entire 27-foot-long east wall. Thin, looping pencil lines, sparse around the perimeter, became progressively denser as they approached the center, culminating in a shiny black core of nearly continuous graphite. At 17 by 27 feet, *Wall Drawing #1166 Light to dark (scribbles)* reversed the process and the image, resulting in the appearance of a hazy ball of light afloat in sooty space. In both works, in the region between the lightly touched pale section and the heavily worked, darkly burnished areas, the roaming, redoubling scribbles were in tonal balance with the white of the wall and revealed such otherwise imperceptible irregularities in its surface as the vertical striations of the wall-painter's roller.

—Stephen Maine