

Nancy Haynes

George Lawson Gallery

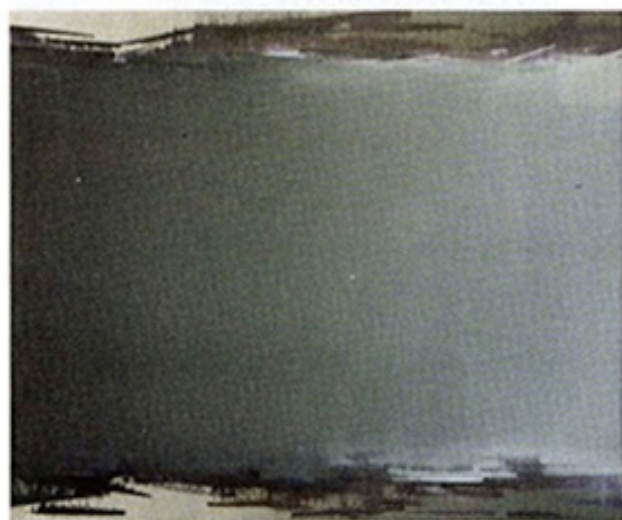
Culver City, California

Collectively, the small oils on linen in this lovely, contemplative show might be called "The Colors of Gray," or "Illuminations." Each not-quite-square surface evolves from a paler shade of a given pigment to a darker one, creating a horizontal movement that pulls the eye toward an unseen source of light. These paintings resist being circumscribed by words and are meant instead to be savored visually as they reveal their subtleties.

In most cases, feathered brush strokes anchor the top and bottom edges of the composition, which results in an intriguing balance between intimations of landscape and architecture, nature and the built environment. The central space of each picture vaguely resembles a hazy sky, but the skies do not rise from earthy horizons or reach into the heavens: Haynes's brushy action along the upper and lower borders reminds viewers that they are looking at paintings, not representations of natural wonders. Titles such as *reading to you at three (for Valyn)*, 2012, or *Kyoto in 1968* (2011/ 2012), indicate that Haynes synthesizes her own personal memories in these abstract works, and leaves their significance open to interpretation.

As viewers grow accustomed to the repetition of the paintings' most striking formal quality, the subtle pigment fade, their differences appear more pronounced. *Constituent element* (2011), perhaps the quietest piece in the show, is streaked with something resembling rain on the right-hand side. *On Kawara's dream* (2012) has an iridescent glow that appears to come from a layer of golden gray. The aptly named *retinal boundary* (2012) zooms from near black to brilliant turquoise, and Haynes has heightened the contrast with sharply defined brushwork. If there was a highlight of the exhibition, it was probably *referent for departure* (2012), a warmly gray, richly painted orchestration of space, light, and color.

—Suzanne Muchnic



Nancy Haynes, *monday evening, (with Michael, Tom and Leslie)*, 2012, oil on linen, 18" x 21". George Lawson Gallery.