

GAGOSIAN

Gagosian to Present New Paintings by Pat Steir

The Artist's First Exhibition in Rome in Nearly Twenty Years



Pat Steir, *Roman Rainbow*, 2021–22, oil on canvas, 108 × 108 inches (274.3 × 274.3 cm) © Pat Steir.
Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein

When I started to pour paint, there was no return—you can't un-pour it. It's there. So I could start a new one, but I couldn't change what I had. Like life.

—Pat Steir

ROME, February 24, 2022—Gagosian is pleased to present *Pat Steir: Paintings*, an exhibition of new and recent works by the renowned American painter. Opening at Gagosian Rome on March 10, 2022, this is her first solo exhibition with the gallery.

With a storied career spanning more than five decades, Pat Steir is a trailblazing presence in contemporary painting. She was one of the few women who came to prominence in the New York art scene of the 1970s, initially pairing iconic images and texts to interrogate the nature of representation. However, in the mid-1980s, inspired by East Asian art and philosophy, she adopted a looser, more performative approach to painting. Harnessing the forces of gravity and gesture, she developed techniques of pouring, splashing, and brushing thinned paint onto canvas, often working at a monumental scale. Influenced in part by John Cage's embrace of chance operations as a compositional strategy in music, and informed by Chinese ink painting and calligraphy, and Zen Buddhist and Daoist thought, among other rich and diverse artistic and literary sources, Steir has evolved an intuitive and mindful rejoinder to the innovations of postwar abstraction. In her latest works, with their bold forays into new chromatic territories, she continues to further her painterly investigations with regard to the roles of intention and improvisation, process and perception in pictorial structure.

The works on view in Rome extend the systematic experimentation that Steir catalyzed in *Color Wheel* (2019), a suite of thirty large-scale paintings exploring binary color dynamics, commissioned by and presented at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC from the fall of 2019 to the summer of 2021. In addition to vibrant hues that generate unexpected nuance through layering and juxtaposition, Steir also continues to work in elemental white and black. Painting on a black ground that is itself poured in layers and then delineated by traced lines to receive its eventful opposite, *One Afternoon* (2021–22), *Raindrop* (2020), and *Night* (2021–22) present a dramatic range of outcomes. *One Afternoon* features a cascade that fills the full width and height of the canvas with light and motion; *Raindrop* is structured with tiers of paint falls, spaced in a rhythmic sequence; and the vast, dark expanse of *Night* is punctuated by a single linear interval from which descend ghostly rivulets. Steir continues and intensifies this last approach in two polychromatic works that evoke seasonal light conditions: *Winter Evening* (2021–22), with its electric harmonies of orange, lavender, blue, and red, and *Winter Daylight* (2021–22), with its streaming bands and layers of many colors.

Rome holds many memories for Steir, including the important 2003 exhibition *D'acqua e d'aria* (*Water and Air*) at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea. *Roman Rainbow* (2021–22), a large-scale painting that Steir made expressly to mark the current exhibition, conjures the sensations of the city, raising the temperature with layered spills of orange, yellow, and blue over a glowing red ground. In direct contrast, *Small Rainbow* (2021–22) features secondary hues of saturated violet, orange, and green that assert themselves against the work's pulsating blue ground.

Pat Steir was born in 1940 in Newark, New Jersey, and lives and works in New York. Collections include Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris; Musée du Louvre, Paris; Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland; Tate Modern, London; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC. Solo museum exhibitions include Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1997; 2010–11); *D'acqua e d'aria: Pat Steir, opere dal 1986 al 2003*, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome (2003); *Silent Secret Waterfalls: The Barnes Series*, Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia (2019); *Color Wheel*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC (2019–21); and Long Museum West Bund, Shanghai (2021–22).

#PatSteir

PAT STEIR

Paintings

Opening reception: Thursday, March 10, 12–8pm

March 10–May 7, 2022

Via Francesco Crispi 16, Rome

Press

PCM Studio

Federica Farci

federica@paolamanfredi.com

+39 342 05 15 787

Gagosian

pressrome@gagosian.com

+39 06 4208 6498