

# AROUND THE GALLERIES

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Kristi Engle Gallery

**'LINKING ROOM':** *Mary Addison Hackett's abstract.*

distinctive, seductive terms without adding demands for the impossible.

Six large recent paintings, five vertical and one square, in Hackett's fine debut solo show at Kristi Engle Gallery mostly succeed by marshaling a virtual anthology of modern painting techniques. Oil, acrylic and spray paint is scuffed, smeared, brushed, poured, dribbled, stained, shaded and drawn. Rulers and other hard edges seem to have been employed in places, along with templates or rudimentary stencils.

In one a linear web of blue marks creates structural scaffolding, built in concert with the painting's lexicon of colorful marks. The sturdy structure contrasts with the evanescent shimmer of silver spray paint. Appropriately titled "Linking Room," the painting carves a visual space in which seemingly incompatible colors, forms and styles all manage to connect. It's large enough (at 6 feet by 5 feet) to engage a viewer's body rather than just the eye.

Comic-book footprints seen from below seem to march across the top of "Fast Acting Mr. Electric Sunshine," flipping the spatial orientation in the elastic manner of a cartoon. "The Highest Mountain" is composed of elements that should not cohere side by side but nevertheless do, and they get there by rhyming a shape, transforming the path of a dribble into an intentional line or making a brush stroke do a sudden U-turn to avoid colli-

sion with another mark.

Hackett has titled her show "I forget now what this is all about ...," quoting the 19th century critic John Ruskin, champion of all things pagan and fierce enemy of standardization. These are paintings drunk on painting, and gimlet-eyed to boot.

**Kristi Engle Gallery**, 5002 York Ave., Highland Park, (323) 472-6237, through June 7. Closed Sundays through Wednesdays. [www.kristienglegallery.com](http://www.kristienglegallery.com).

## Visual feast of color, technique

There's an easygoing charm to **Mary Addison Hackett's** abstract paintings, a simple acknowledgment that, hey, this is art, not rocket science or a cure for cancer. Painting is tough enough to pull off on its own