

Entertainment — Arts & Entertainment

Art galleries: Kocot & Hatton

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by Edith Newhall, For The Inquirer

Exploring color, shape

Philadelphia conceptual artist team Kocot and Hatton (Marcia Kocot and Tom Hatton) have worked on paintings exploring color and shape since 2008. Their current show at Larry Becker Contemporary Art offers examples.

Here are square, entirely blue paintings, from *The Color of Blue*, homages to Kazimir Malevich's square suprematist compositions and Yves Klein's affection for blue, and shaped monochromatic paintings from their "Axis" series, exploring the impact of shape on a color's hue and force. The team's investigations in the latter series seem completely borne out. Orange does appear to "spread wide," as Kocot and Hatton learned, red "stretches vertically," blue "slides calmly from side to side," and violet is "more compact."

The same goes for the works from their recent "Blueprint" painting studies and works assembled from pieces of torn paper, which the artists begin in a half-awake hypnopompic state that has been part of their practice for years.

I'm still pondering their new "Axis + Blue" paintings of brushy, indeterminate ultramarine blue forms painted on raw linen stretched over rhomboid-shaped canvases. I think I understand the artists' impetus - to see how the blue paint behaved while saturating raw linen in a canvas' center of gravity - but the contrasts of awkwardness between the soft, unformed painted shape and the rhomboid support are, to me, a visual conundrum.

Through Dec. 3 at Larry Becker Contemporary Art, 43 N. Second St. Hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday and by appointment. Information: 215-925-5389 or www.artnet.com/galleries/larry-becker-contemporary-art.

