

Mar

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## Review: Judith Geichman/Carrie Secrist Gallery

► Painting, West Loop

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"Zoo Toon"

### RECOMMENDED

Conventional wisdom has it that art, and the objects we can experience as art, is limitless. But frankly, I think limits are a good thing. Without the limitations imposed by size, support and medium, and the concomitant pressures they apply upon the artist, creative innovation just isn't possible. Painter Judith Geichman must know this, and her new solo show at Carrie Secrist Gallery is testament to the beauty and necessity of limits.

Working within the sparest of parameters, Geichman's paintings are thrilling displays of dexterity. Her square supports and strictly achromatic blend of acrylic and enamel paint evoke the kind of old-school, unabashedly mid-century abstraction that

pulses with the vigor and vitality of the artist's hand. The brash white gestures and viscous pools of black paint in canvases such as "Flash" and "Zoo Toon" elicit vaguely figurative references—while "Flow" throbs with a barely contained, almost erotic energy.



The centerpiece of the exhibition, the mural-scale "Ireland to U.S.," is an impressive, and at times overwhelming, installation of sixty acrylic works-on-paper. The paint handling in these charismatic pictures evince a decisiveness that suggests antecedents in Western art (Pollock) as well as Nenga or Bokuseki—intuitive forms of Zen brush practice. Their simplicity and diversity attest to the supreme malleability of paint as an artist's medium.

Throughout the show, Geichman coaxes her restricted media into several impressive displays. Paint flutters, cracks and ripples across canvas and paper alike, bearing witness to an artist pushing against the confines of her material choices. A spirited cadence permeates even the mediocre pieces on view, and it's the omnipresent tension between limited means and limitless approach that makes Geichman's "New Paintings and Works on Paper" such a compelling experience. (Alan Pocaro)

*Through March 30 at Carrie Secrist Gallery, 835 West Washington.*