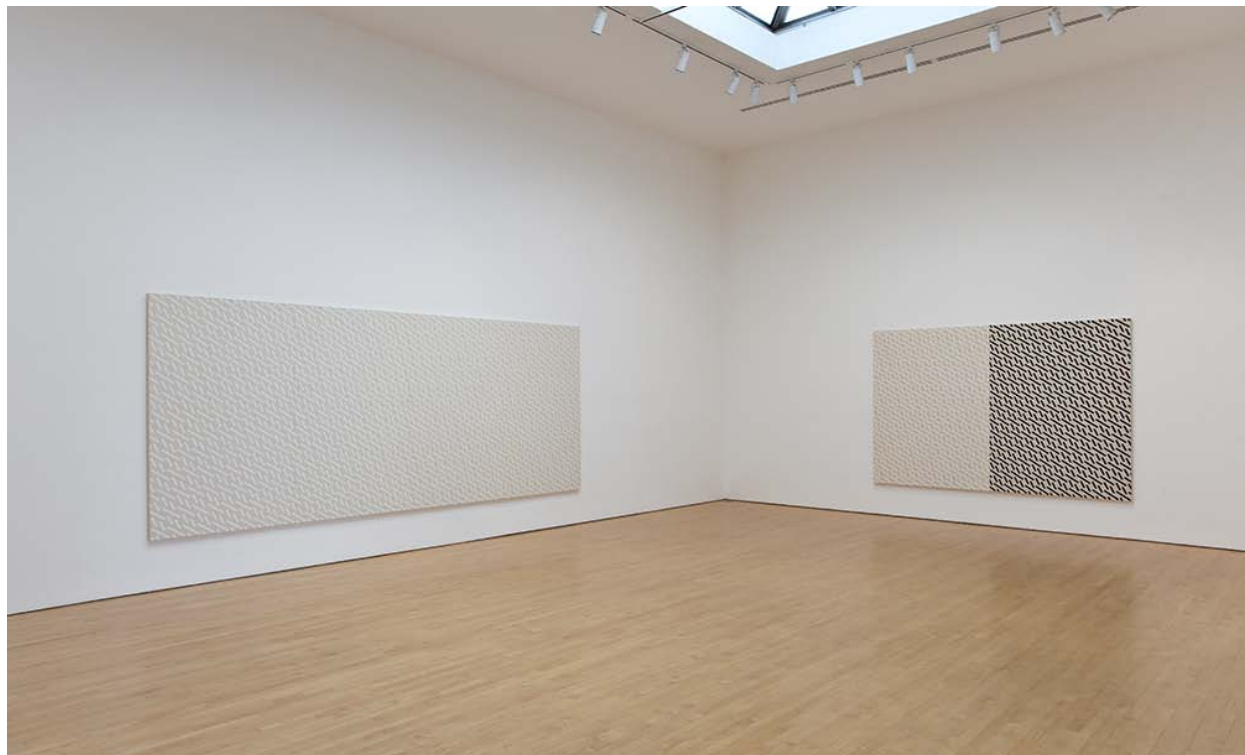


Knight, Christopher. "Patterns wax, wane and snap" (John M. Miller at Margo Leavin Gallery). *Los Angeles Times*, 28 October 2011, p. D20.



The installation of three paintings by John M. Miller in the main room at Margo Leavin Gallery is flawless -- which isn't really surprising, since the artist made them in the early 1990s expressly for that capacious, sky-lighted space. Miller brought the intensity and precision found within his geometric abstractions to the scale and composition of the canvases installed in the room. It might be the most beautiful room of paintings in a Los Angeles gallery right now.

As with the show's other four paintings, all from the same decade, the three works share a format Miller developed nearly 40 years ago and has extrapolated ever since. Pairs of angled color-bars are painted on raw canvas, visually stitching together the surface, the woven cotton of the canvas, the vertical and horizontal dimensions of traditional Western painting and even the multiple panels from which each is made. "Waxing" and "Waning" are diptychs, their colors forming a mirror image on opposite sides of the room, while the horizontal sweep of "Passage" -- more than 15 feet wide -- is composed from four abutted vertical canvases.

Miller's paintings virtually demand an investment in contemplative time. Without it, they remain essentially out of sight.

Some of the angled bars mix blue, purple or green pigment into black, meaning that the richness and depth of color remains invisible if the glance is cursory. The white bars optically fuse with the raw canvas, at least until your eyes slow down to see them. The patterns also initially jump around, finally snapping into place to hold the picture together as the conventional buzzing in your brain dissipates. The experience of perceptual clarity is remarkable, worthy of a secular chapel.