

Intoxicating

Optical-illusion paintings
can overwhelm the senses

By Mike Daniel

Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

Here's a suggestion for viewers of McKinney Avenue Contemporary's new exhibition: Bring a designated driver.

"post-hypnotic" is a visual liquor store, with 25 spirits (read: paintings) by 23 bottlers

'post-hypnotic'

The MAC, opens Saturday

(artists) who expound upon the visual trickery and blatant radicalness of the op art movement of the 1960s. It

was organized by the University Art Museum of Illinois State University at Normal and its curator, former New York gallery owner Barry Blinderman.

The paintings, all dating from the 1980s to the present, use illusionary techniques, vibrant primary colors and reality-bending patterns to alter optical perceptions. They trick eyes into sensing curves, hues and movement that aren't actually there and, in many cases, cloak an underlying social purpose for the work.

For instance, Karin Davie's large-scale *Wanted* resembles a cross section of a half-gallon box of some custom-mixed, patriotic Neapolitan ice cream. In general, however, her languid line distortions are suggestive of the female form, and this particular piece possesses more of those forms than most, once viewers burrow

past the deep red, white and blue swaths of paint.

According to the curator, such substance is what separates this "neo-op" work from its unburdened predecessors, which gained prominence as nontheo-

retical opposition to minimalism and pop art, both usually fraught with intellectual concerns. Op art was unfettered eye candy.

The "post-hypnotic" show is fun and challenging. Try counting the spokes in



CONCENTRIC SEQUENCE:

By Mark Dagley, acrylic on canvas, 1996

Philip Taaffe's *Big Iris* linoprint collage, without a finger or a pen as an aid. It hurts to attempt it.

Susie Rosmarin's *Static Study #45* is almost painfully precise in its execution of perfectly straight lines. Look at it for more than a few seconds, though, and the lines start buckling. Mark Dagley's *Concentric Sequence*, with thousands of multicolored dots, borders on visual abuse.

Though the exhibition is heavy with New York artists, regional talents are represented, including Aaron Parazette, Ms. Rosmarin and Tad Griffin of Houston and David Szafranski, co-founder of Dallas' Gray Matters Gallery, who now resides in France. Sarah Morris and Jason Martin of England and Yayoi Kusama of Japan lend international clout.

Critics at the exhibition's previous venues have admitted to an occasional nauseous reaction. So be warned: Absorb this art in moderation. As with real imbibing, pace is the key.

■ **DETAILS:** "post-hypnotic" opens with a reception Saturday from 6 to 8 p.m. and will be on display through July 25 at the McKinney Avenue Contemporary, 3120 McKinney Ave. Hours are Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday 1 to 5 p.m. Free. Call 214-953-1212. www.themac.net