

Albright-Knox shows chart careers of Feeley, Frankenthaler

The Albright-Knox Art Gallery is known around the world for its collection of abstract expressionist masterpieces, which serve as a peerless chronicle of an American movement concerned with acting out dark and messy inner dramas through the act of painting. After that dizzying period of unbridled catharsis, the art world gradually migrated toward more sober-minded forms of expression, like op art and minimalism. But the transition was neither neat nor immediate, nor did everyone suddenly give up abstract expressionism and jump straight into slimmed-down forms and conceptual coolness of later decades.

There was plenty of connective tissue between the movements, as two new shows in the Albright-Knox demonstrate. The exhibitions, organized by the gallery's chief curator emeritus Douglas Dreishpoon, trace the careers of two important artists who worked in the aftermath of abstract expressionism and played key roles in fostering future movements: Helen Frankenthaler and Paul Feeley.

"Imperfections by Chance: Paul Feeley Retrospective," includes pieces ranging from the painter's early abstract expressionist work to his geometrical compositions of the 1960s. "Giving Up One's Mark: Helen Frankenthaler in the 1960s and 1970s," charts a 20-year period in the artist's career during which she transitioned "from oil to acrylic paint, and from gestural abstraction to robust images of consolidated color and tonal nuance."

Both exhibitions include works on paper that provide a glimpse into each artist's creative process, a preoccupation of Dreishpoon, who has long promoted the exhibition of preparatory drawings and other material that demonstrates how artists arrived at their definitive styles and masterworks.

—*Colin Dabkowski*