

Chicago Tribune

ART REVIEW

Girls being free

April 05, 2002 | By Alan G. Artner | Tribune art critic

Evelyn Statsinger

Some years ago on a trip to Japan, veteran Chicago artist Evelyn Statsinger bought a number of Japanese brushes, which until recently went unused. The exhibition of drawings at Printworks indicates how Statsinger has employed the brushes with acrylic inks to create pieces that stand somewhat apart from her familiar work.

I say "somewhat" because several drawings show an abiding love of nature; they easily can be related to earlier Statsinger works, and in a glass case devoted to smaller pieces Printworks makes an attempt. However, the rest of the sheets hold abstractions that sometimes seem closer to early Georgia O'Keeffe drawings than to Statsinger's paintings or any sort of work from Japan.

Each of the gestures looks rapid and the resulting combinations of color instantaneous, without any noodling. Some of the forms relate to organic growths, though more appear to be lyrical explorations of gesture and primarily subdued color, with a few larger pieces having a percolating rhythm.

The majority of works are small in size, a condition that underlines an overall impression of slightness. The group of 27 does not add up to more than a sum of its parts but remains a beguiling series of fantasy-caprices. Admirers of the artist will enjoy relating them to her various other experiments, doubtless taking pleasure from how Statsinger's output has continued to be unpredictable well into the artist's 70s.