

**Art Reviews**  
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**by Holly Myers**  
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**Old techniques, used in new ways.**

San Francisco-based artist Joel Hoyer has been working with the age-old processes of egg tempera painting and metal leaf gilding for more than 30 years. He shows little sign, in his first L.A. exhibition, of having exhausted their possibilities.

The question of how such antiquated materials might translate into contemporary practice is compelling, especially in light of the current fascination with new media. Hoyer's approach to the issue is experimental rather than theoretical.

Avoiding historical traditions altogether, he focuses instead on exploring and accentuating the intrinsic nature of each substance. The most striking works are monochromatic, multi-paneled paintings strewn with lava-like formations and coated in gold or silver leaf.

The compositions are spare and dramatic and show off the sensual luster of the material to its fullest. Also notable for their unadorned elegance are several slender, 7-foot staffs of wood, polished smooth and tipped with shiny 24-karat gold.

With the temperas — used primarily in small monochromatic paintings and sculptures — Hoyer exhibits the same desire for purity but with less exciting results. The colors themselves are wonderfully bright and clear but require a more interesting form: They don't say much on their own.

All is all, however, Hoyer's dedication to his media makes for a solid, intriguing body of work. at Circle Elephant Art, 4634 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, 323-662-3279, through Saturday March 27.