

Abstractions evoke sense of place, from experience or lore

By Edward J. Sozanski
INQUIRER ART CRITIC

In his Parallels Gallery exhibition, New York painter Paul Fabozzi has set himself an intriguing and challenging task: to represent in art the gap between received knowledge of a place and one's firsthand experience of it.

That may sound more like a theoretical academic exercise than a painter's problem, but Fabozzi, who teaches at St. John's University in New York, has extracted some engaging paintings from it.

His inspirational place in this case is Rome, which has attracted artists for centuries. Fabozzi's oil paintings, augmented by three pencil drawings, bear titles that refer to the city but don't actually represent it.

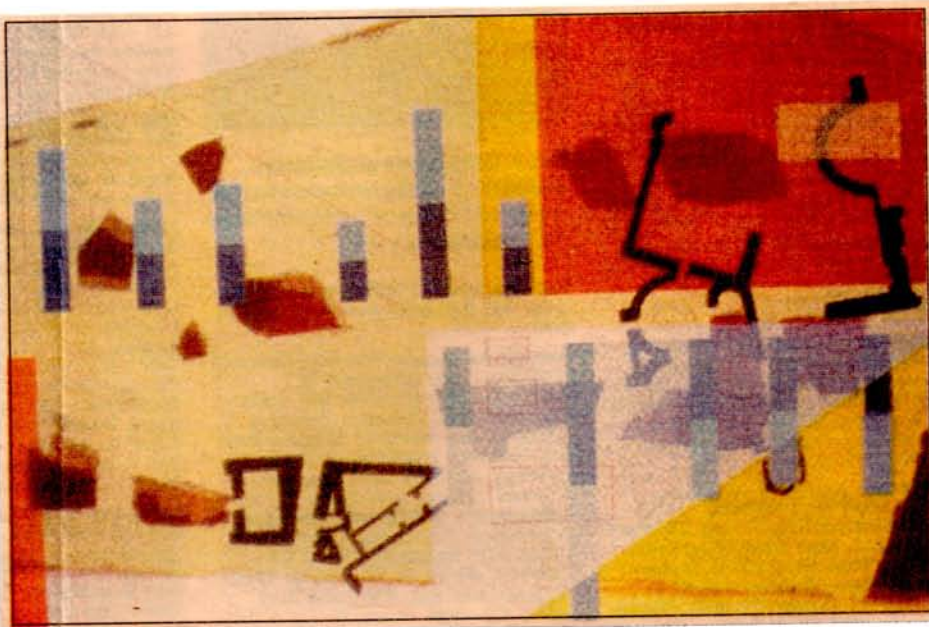
Rigorous geometry plays off luminous color.

Each painting is a geometric abstraction in which the artist has embedded archaeological references, particularly shapes that look like building footprints. These float on a field of colored blocks cut by diagonals and sometimes partially obscured by translucent white scrims.

The fact that the compositions are carefully calculated and their color passages sensitively organized in relation to one another conveys the sense of layered experience, even though it's not specific.

The building footprints add an antique element, a clear allusion to knowledge gained through observation and archaeology. This juxtaposition of rigorous geometry, luminous color and empirical scholarship results in an attractive amalgam of symbolism and sensation.

Parallels Gallery, 321 Arch St. 4 to 6 p.m.
Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays. Through April 19. Information: 215-574-2989.



"Foro Romano #2," by Paul Fabozzi. Rome is the inspiration in Fabozzi's oils and pencil drawings at the Parallels Gallery, as shapes that look like building footprints float on fields of colored blocks. The works will be on display through April 19.