

Art

By Edward J. Sozanski
INQUIRER ART CRITIC

Environmental expressionism.

Stone also figures prominently in Dove Bradshaw's exhibition at Larry Becker Contemporary Art. Bradshaw makes art by exploiting chemical interactions of natural materials. Her sculpture *Waterstones* consists of four limestone blocks that are being pitted by acid rain steadily dripping from four glass flasks.

This is obviously an environmental statement, and more science than art. Bradshaw started the dripping a year ago, and the deleterious effect of her collected rainwater is already quite startling.

Most of the other works in the show could be called paintings because that's what they most resemble. Some are made by coating canvas or paper with silver leaf, then exposing the surfaces to sulfur, which gradually, but not uniformly, transforms the shiny silver into dark splotches.

The result is abstract expressionism, achieved unpredictably, and — aside from initiating the process — without the artist's intervention. Two other works consist of powdered sulfur applied to a linen canvas. Because of their bright yellow color and thick, granular surfaces, these resemble abstract expressionist paintings even more closely.



One might be tempted to dismiss these pieces as chemistry stunts. But like scholar's rocks, they demonstrate that nature can create art. The sulfur paintings in particular are quite beautiful — at least one would say so if they were created with pigments.

Larry Becker Contemporary Art, 43 N. 2d. St. Hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, by appointment Tuesdays through Thursdays. Through May 20. Phone: 215-925-5389.