

## The Philadelphia Inquirer

### Reclusive to revered

Few people knew that David Byrd, who was born in Springfield, Ill., in 1926, and who died in Upstate New York in 2013, was a painter. But his friend and neighbor, the artist Jody Isaacson, saw the large body of work Byrd had created over the years and then saw to it that his paintings were shown in two galleries during his lifetime. It's now getting the attention it deserves.

His paintings can be seen for the first time in Philadelphia, in "David Byrd: Patient Pondering" at Fleisher/Ollman Gallery.

Byrd was not a self-taught artist. In the 1940s, after his service in the Merchant Marine in World War II and the Army afterward, he studied on the GI Bill with the Cubist painter Amédée Ozenfant at his school in New York.

Another powerful influence on Byrd's painting came from his years working in a psychiatric hospital and the despair he witnessed there, as recorded in his grim painting *Patient Pondering* from 1995. His quasi-erotic painting of a young woman, *Fixing Her Hair* from 1995, is clearly influenced by Balthus' works, suggesting that Byrd's isolation did not wall him off from the art of the times.

Through Nov. 10 at Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, 1216 Arch St., 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays. 215-545-7562 or fleisherollman.com.



"Solo Pool Player" by David Byrd.