

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORM  
FIGURE  
ABSTRACTION

*Milton Avery, Romare Bearden, Hans Hofmann, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning,  
Joan Mitchell, Robert Motherwell, Paul Resika, Jane Wilson*

June 6 – July 31, 2014



Joan Mitchell, *Untitled*, 1957. Oil on canvas, 19 3/4 x 28 in.

*Form, Figure, Abstraction* features a choice selection of paintings and works on paper that highlight the range of work created by several artists who were at the forefront of modern American art in the 1940s and 1950s. The exhibition title was selected to reflect the variety of approaches taken at the time, from updated modernism to full-blown abstraction. The 1950s, in particular, are often characterized as the decade of Abstract Expressionism, but the reality is more complicated and ultimately, more interesting.

Abstraction, as the term is generally used in the art world outside of academia, is a broad designation that embraces many variations on the theme of non-representational art. Several of the works in the exhibition, by artists as diverse as **Joan Mitchell, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, Romare Bearden, and Jane Wilson**, approach non-referential, pure abstraction. Even so, some of the titles, such as Bearden's *Strange Land* and Wilson's *Black Still Life*, belie the fact that most, if not all, abstraction originates in and maintains ties to form and figure, however tangential.

The other works in the exhibition, by **Hans Hofmann, Milton Avery, Robert Motherwell, and Paul Resika** are abstracted to varying degrees through expressive paint handling, bold color, simplified shapes, and other techniques. Some of them maintain recognizable contours of objects and places, while others transform reality with radically altered forms, flowing lines, and overlapping tonal planes.

This focused show is organized to complement the larger exhibition of the work of **Robert De Niro, Sr.** that is also on view. All of the artists were contemporaries, and, in the days when the New York art world was much smaller, were acquainted with each other's work. De Niro studied with Hofmann, in fact, as did some of the others who are represented in this exhibition. He was also a good friend of Resika. Most of all, what these artists shared was a commitment to personal experimentation and a thoroughly modern sensibility that reconfigured American art.

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