

# eric firestone gallery



## New West Palm Beach gallery spotlights overlooked postwar American artists, underrepresented groups

WLRN Public Media | By [Wilkin Brutus](#)

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Seven decades' worth of overlooked postwar American artists and underrepresented groups will see the light at a newly expanded art space in the historic Flamingo Park neighborhood of West Palm Beach.

By pairing historical works with contemporary artists, the inaugural exhibition — “Cross Generational: 1950 to Now” — at the new Eric Firestone Gallery strives to foster dialogue around shared themes, ideas and techniques.

Curator and gallery owner Eric Firestone told WLRN that the show will feature works by 25 emerging and established artists, with an official opening on Jan. 31.

Firestone, a Florida native “who used to be dragged to a lot of art antique shows when he was a young kid in South Miami,” has a knack for scholarly reexaminations of artists he says are too often overlooked by the art world.

“Reexamining American artists tends to be women artists and minority artists. And the reason why is 40, 50 years ago, if not further, there really wasn’t as much visibility for the demographics in the market,” Firestone told WLRN.

“Become aware. And the only way that we really become aware is by familiarity.”

The exhibition includes a focused look at the late Joe Overstreet, the legendary Black abstract painter and activist who first gained recognition in California’s Bay Area. His Civil Rights–



The exhibition Cross Generational: 1950 to Now at the new Eric Firestone Gallery in West Palm Beach includes a focused look at the late Joe Overstreet, the legendary Black abstract painter and activist who first gained recognition in California’s Bay Area. Untitled, 1970 acrylic on canvas

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inspired abstractions date to the late 1950s, and after moving to New York, he and his partner Corrine Jennings founded Kenkeleba House, a gallery that has championed artists of color and women.

Firestone's exhibition also highlights works by the late Pat Passlof, a prominent New York-based Abstract Expressionist active in the late 1950s and earlier, who lived and worked in a former synagogue. Her work is widely recognized for its abstracted landscapes, and she was a student of the late Dutch-American artist Willem de Kooning.

Contemporary artists featured include Huê Thi Hoffmaster, a Connecticut-based artist known for large-scale floral abstractions inspired by Eastern and Western traditions, and Lauren dela Roche, a St. Louis-based artist recognized for her dreamlike paintings of elongated nude female figures.



Lauren dela Roche

Lauren dela Roche is a St. Louis-based artist recognized for her dreamlike paintings of elongated nude female figures.

Firestone said there's a "whole wave of younger artists" inspired by those who came before them.

## A new space in a growing creative hub

The New York-based gallery, with current locations in New York City and East Hampton, has grown from a pop-up in the area into a permanent space in the historic Flamingo Park neighborhood of West Palm Beach.

The neighborhood has emerged as a growing arts hotspot, surrounded by several notable museums and galleries, including the Norton Museum of Art, the Armory Art Center, the Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery and The Peach.

Eric Firestone Gallery is going to be a rotating exhibition space where curators will change works throughout the season. And it will include community engagement programs with panel discussions.

It's "necessary" for there to be a burgeoning creative hub in a residential area like Flamingo Park, Firestone said.

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