

# eric firestone gallery

**Pat Passlof** (b. Brunswick, GA, 1928, d. New York, NY, 2011) was an abstract painter of the New York School whose tireless exploration of color and form gave her work a distinct voice. Having grown up in New York, in 1948, Passlof travelled to Asheville, North Carolina to study at the famed Black Mountain College, where she took classes with Willem de Kooning. This summer proved pivotal for her trajectory as a painter; she continued to study with de Kooning privately after returning to New York, eventually leaving the city again to earn a BFA at Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1951. Back in New York in the 1950s, she became a fixture in the downtown arts scene, attending meetings at The Club (eventually organizing "The Wednesday Night Club"), showing at the March Gallery on 10<sup>th</sup> Street, and marrying fellow painter Milton Resnick.

Passlof's early work built on her art education. She utilized biomorphic forms like those in the contemporary work of Arshile Gorky and de Kooning and was influenced by existentialist ideology which informed Abstract Expressionism. However, Passlof was always individualistic and her work was constantly varied in terms of touch, form, and palette. She was never content to repeat herself.

By the 1960s her palette began to lighten. She used repeated patterns and marks across the canvas to create dynamic rhythms. She drew upon experiences and memories, as noted by titles referring to people and places. However, she never believed in narrative in painting, even when—in later years, her work became peopled by centaurs, nymphs, and horses.

Her work often suggested abstracted landscapes, like the later work of Claude Monet, although Passlof often worked in a vertical format. She lived and worked in the Lower East Side, in a former synagogue. Her husband, Resnick, had his own synagogue building as a live/work space. In addition, they spent time in the Shawangunk Mountain area of upstate New York, and the space and air of the mountain ridge influenced her painting.

Passlof was a beloved and dedicated professor who taught at Richmond College, CUNY, from 1972 to 1983; and the College of Staten Island, CUNY from 1983 until 2010 (the year before her death.) The 2018 publication *To Whom the Shoe Fits*, is a compilation of letters she wrote to her undergraduate students over the years.

Passlof was the subject of a solo exhibition at the famed Green Gallery, New York in 1961. In the 1960s and 70s she also showed at the Globe Gallery, the Feiner Gallery, and the Landmark Gallery. Beginning in the 1990s, she exhibited regularly with Elizabeth Harris Gallery. A retrospective of her work was held at the Black Mountain College Museum, Asheville, NC, in 2011. Her work is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, NY, and was included in their 2017 exhibition, *Making Space: Women Artists and Postwar Abstraction*.

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