

# eric firestone gallery

**For Immediate Release:**

## **FRIEZE MASTERS**

**Eric Firestone Gallery — Booth A6**

The Regents Park | London

Preview days: October 9–10, 2024

General Admission: October 11–13, 2024

*New York Women Artists 1950s–1970s*

Elise Asher • Martha Edelheit • Susan Fortgang • Lee Krasner • Pat Lipsky • Pat Passlof  
Jeanne Reynal • Miriam Schapiro • Nina Yankowitz



Pat Passlof | *Keeping Still Mountain* | 1971-72

oil on linen

80.0h x 132.0w in

Eric Firestone Gallery is pleased to announce its participation in the 2024 edition of Frieze Masters, London with *New York Women Artists: 1950s–1970s*. The presentation includes the work of nine artists, born between 1903 and 1946, who each brought a singular voice to post-World War II abstraction. The installation honors recent scholarship and an art world where women artists are breaking sales records and achieving major institutional recognition for their role in Abstract Expressionism and postwar abstraction.

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Miriam Schapiro | *Byzantium* | 1967  
acrylic on canvas  
106h x 89w in

**Elise Asher** (1912–2004), a painter-poet, incorporated calligraphic text within atmospheric clouds of brushwork. Asher was the subject of a solo exhibition at the gallery in Fall 2023, which re-introduced the public to her work and established a significant market. The personal style of these linear abstractions was Asher’s unique contribution to post-war abstraction. Asher was also a noted poet who published three volumes of poetry; her poetry is used in numerous paintings. Asher’s paintings are suggestive rather than literal and legible.

**Pat Passlof** (1928–2011) created abstract paintings that responded to memory, experience, and place without narrative. In December 2023 one of her most monumental works was acquired by Crystal Bridges Museum; paintings were recently acquired by both the Museum of Modern Art, NY, and the Whitney Museum, NY. The gallery’s presentation at Frieze Masters London 2022 of Passlof was critically acclaimed and sold out. In 1948, Passlof studied with Willem

de Kooning at the famed Black Mountain College in Asheville, North Carolina. This summer proved pivotal for her trajectory as a painter; she continued to study with de Kooning privately after returning to New York. In the 1950s, she became a fixture in the downtown New York art scene, attending meetings at The Club and eventually organizing “The Wednesday Night Club” as an alternative to the male-dominated original. She co-founded the artist-run March Gallery on 10th Street and married fellow painter Milton Resnick. Her major painting, *Keeping Still Mountain*, 1971-72 is a highlight of the presentation and has never before been available for acquisition. Its rhythmic brushwork and thickets of paint – pinks and yellows emerging through greens - reflect Passlof’s belief in the call-and-response process between the painter and the canvas. The title also suggests a devotional, meditative form of concentration.

**Miriam Schapiro** (1923–2015) is now well-known as a pioneer of the Women’s Art Movement, and for her contribution to the Pattern and Decoration Movement. She fused craft work, traditionally made by women, with modern painting in collages termed “femmege.” However, the Frieze presentation will additionally shed light on her early Abstract Expressionist canvases, and her pioneering approach utilizing computer technology to create Hard Edge geometric painting in Southern California in the 1960s. Her early abstractions were often based on figurative source material like film stills and news photographs, and explore the roles women occupy: as wives, mothers, and hopefully, agents

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of their own careers. Beginning in 1967, Schapiro collaborated with scientists, using early computers and custom software to create monumental hard-edged abstractions that also codify the female form, as well as reflecting the landscape and architecture of Southern California. Work from this period is included in four concurrent museum exhibitions exploring the intersection of art and science: *Particles and Waves: Southern California Abstraction and Science, 1945-1990* at Palm Springs Art Museum, CA; *Electric Op* at the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, NY; *The Living End: Painting and Other Technologies, 1970-Present* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; and *Radical Software: Women, Art & Computing 1960-1991* at MUDAM Museum of Modern Art in Luxembourg and traveling to Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna.

A second generation of women abstractionists includes **Nina Yankowitz** (b. 1946), **Pat Lipsky** (b. 1941), and **Susan Fortgang** (b. 1944). Pat Lipsky's work is associated with Lyrical Abstraction and Color Field painting. Her *Wave* paintings are exuberant, vivid, and fresh. They are, by necessity, painted in one shot: acrylic on unprimed canvas, with color bands in loose wave formations. The waveforms are loose and aqueous, made by soaking the canvas with water and pouring liquid color. The color bands often dissolve into drips and splatters within the rectangle of the canvas. The forms do not extend to the outer edges of the canvas; they float in its open space. Nina Yankowitz created daring, dynamic works: spraying mists of acrylic paint to produce atmospheric expanses and then hanging the unstretched canvases in loose soft folds that cascade down and across the wall. Yankowitz will be the subject of a retrospective at the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, FL, in Spring 2025. Susan Fortgang creates paintings with a physical presence, using thick layers of paint to form textured surfaces. She studied painting at Queens College, before going to Yale's School of Art, where she would earn a BFA in 1966 and MFA in 1968. Early on, the artist made action paintings. These works from the late 1960's employ vibrant palettes and biomorphic forms, capturing the excitement of the moment, undergirded by a logic of abstract shapes seemingly gravitating towards one another in companionship.

Works on view by **Martha Edelheit** (b. 1931) present a trajectory from abstraction to paintings foregrounding the female gaze. In the late 1950s, Edelheit established herself in the center of the



Elise Asher | *Untitled* | 1961-63  
oil on gesso panel  
50.0h x 24.0w in

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Lee Krasner | *Present Conditional* | 1976  
collage on canvas  
72h x 108w in

downtown avant-garde, becoming a member of the Tenth Street artist-run space, the Reuben Gallery. There, Edelheit first exhibited her “extension” paintings which break the frame of the work and utilize utilitarian objects. They combine impasto paint and found materials into shaped constructions characterized by their raw energy. In the 1960s, Martha Edelheit began working from models in her studio, seeking to contribute to an art historical lineage she deeply admired but also recognized was dominated by men, for men. She was interested in tattoos as an early form of art; the flesh a surface, like canvas. This led to her *Flesh Wall* series, which conflate the body, body markings, canvas, and wallpaper (transgressing a high art form by appropriating a kitsch household object). Her work, with its frank sexuality, was shocking to audiences at the time, and gradually became situated as a form of feminism: radical eroticism. A major *Flesh Wall* painting will be included in a 2025 exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY, *Sixties Surreal*.

A highlight of the Frieze presentation is a monumental work by **Lee Krasner** (1908–1984), *Present Conditional* (1976). The painting is part of her series “Eleven Ways to Use the Word To See,” which was exhibited at Pace Gallery in 1977. For this series, Krasner revisited her student portfolios, cutting up her drawings and repurposing them into large, multi-panel constructions which reference verb tenses and states of action. Krasner considered these biographical works; she made the original drawings as a student of the highly influential teacher and painter Hans Hofmann. Hofmann himself was known

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for tearing student drawings in half and repositioning the parts as a way to demonstrate “push and pull” - the plasticity of forms in space. Krasner’s immense contribution to Abstract Expressionist painting continues to be re-evaluated today. Her work is included in the permanent collections of major institutions, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Buffalo AKG Museum; New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; and the Tate, London; among many others.

Like Krasner, **Jeanne Reynal** (1903–1983) was also a first-generation New York School artist. Her highly significant role in the post-war American art world, as an artist, patron, and museum advisor, is beginning to be recognized. She was a mosaicist who challenged expectations of the medium by creating abstract works and, as she described, “a contemporary and fresh look for this ancient medium.” Reynal was dedicated to the ways in which hand-cut stones and glass tiles, set on a bias, could reflect and create light across a surface. She applied tesserae (the tiles, stone, and shells she used to construct her mosaics) in loose formations, to a ground of pigmented cement. Her work was often subtle and painterly. She had met the Surrealists during her years in Paris (1930–38), becoming an important figure in the intersection of Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism, and showing alongside Arshile Gorky, Roberto Matta, and Wifredo Lam, among others. Reynal’s totemic mosaics will be included in a major exhibition at the Fundació Joan Miró and The Phillips Collection in the fall of 2025, which will examine the fertile artistic conversation between Joan Miró and artists such as Reynal.

The Frieze Masters presentation, with its focus on nine women artists of the postwar period, demonstrates Eric Firestone Gallery’s commitment to re-investigating the ever-evolving art historical canon, and developing scholarship on significant American artists.

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**For further information, contact: [press@ericfirestonegallery.com](mailto:press@ericfirestonegallery.com)**