

eric firestone gallery

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

13 American Artists: A Celebration of Historic Work

April 29 - June 26, 2021

Eric Firestone Gallery

40 Great Jones Street | New York, NY

Featuring work by:

**Elaine Lustig Cohen | Charles DuBack | Martha Edelheit | Shirley Gorelick
Mimi Gross | Howard Kanovitz | Jay Milder | Daphne Mumford |
Joe Overstreet | Pat Passlof | Reuben Kadish |
Miriam Schapiro | Thomas Sills**



Charles DuBack | Adam and Eve, 1970 | acrylic, wood and felt on canvas | 96h x 120w in

In honor of our first season in a new ground floor space at 40 Great Jones Street, **Eric Firestone Gallery** presents ***13 American Artists***, an exhibition showcasing artists from the gallery's unique, wide-ranging historical program. The gallery has made central a mission to explore the ever-expanding canon of Post-World War II American art. Over the last several years, the gallery has presented major retrospectives to champion artists whose stories needed to be re-told. Their significant contributions to art history have been further reinforced by recent institutional acquisitions and exhibitions. *13 American Artists* celebrates this ongoing endeavor, and the new gallery, presenting several artists and estates for the first time in our New York City location.

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Shirley Gorelick (1924-2000) is known for her humanist paintings of subjects who have traditionally not been heroized in large-scale portraiture. Gorelick, like most artists in this exhibition, forged her career outside of the mainstream art world. She was a founding member of Central Hall Artists Gallery, an all-women artist-run gallery in Port Washington, New York, and between 1975 and 1986, had six solo exhibitions at the New York City feminist cooperative SOHO20. Eric Firestone Gallery is pleased to announce the **recent acquisition** of Shirley Gorelick's "Double Libby II," (1971-72), by the **Baltimore Museum of Art**.



In 1949, **Pat Passlof** (1928-2011) helped renovate the Eighth Street loft, which was the first location of The Club: the gathering place of Abstract Expressionists. Noticing that many of her peers rarely spoke when they came to the Club, she decided to organize an alternative "Wednesday Night Club." In 1956, Passlof helped found the March Gallery, where she had two exhibitions and helped organize many shows of other artists, including Mark di Suvero's first exhibition. In 1961 she had a solo exhibition at Dick Bellamy's Green Gallery. Passlof is considered one of the foremost women of Abstract Expressionism.

A 1950 painting, a recent acquisition, is on view at the **Museum of Modern Art**, New York.

Pat Passlof | Lookout, 1959 | oil on linen | 69h x 64w in

Landmark Gallery was founded in 1972 in SoHo by a small group of artists - including the artist-couple **Charles DuBack** (1926-2015) and **Daphne Mumford** (b. 1935). DuBack's 1973 exhibition at the Landmark Gallery was a meta exploration of the interior/exterior of the gallery. He created large-scale "sculpto-paintings" that represent people gathered inside and outside of the gallery with real architectural elements, like windowsills and door frames, attached to the canvases. Major paintings by DuBack are held in the collections of the **Portland Museum of Art** and the **Colby College Museum of Art**. Mumford's work is representational but subtle and symbolic. She depicted musicians and dancers who were friends of her daughters, casting a female gaze onto the creativity of young women.

Martha Edelheit (b. 1931) was a member of the Reuben Gallery, where her first solo show was held in 1960. She, like other members Jim Dine and Claes Oldenberg, were expanding the definitions of art-making with the creation of Happenings and experimental objects. There, Edelheit first exhibited her "extension" paintings which break the frame of the work and incorporate utilitarian objects. By 1962, Edelheit began to move from abstraction into figuration, and to explore the subject of tattooing in her work. Edelheit's work challenged traditional notions of figurative painting. Her work was recently featured by Maccarone Gallery, Los Angeles, and Larsen Warner Gallery, Stockholm.

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Mimi Gross | Car from "The Hold Up", 1977 | pastel on paper, laminated on cardboard | 155h x 55w in

In 1958, **Mimi Gross** (b. 1940) lived in Provincetown and met Bob Thompson and **Jay Milder** (b. 1934), who would introduce Gross to **Red Grooms**. These friendships led to the founding of the City Gallery, an artist cooperative where Gross exhibited her work for the first time. From 1960-1976, Gross collaborated with Grooms on large, multidimensional installations, including the fabled "Ruckus Manhattan." Gross continues to work in what she terms 2 ½ D, referring to painted and cut forms positioned in space. Her 1961 painting "Bagno a Ripoli (Firenze)" was recently acquired by the **Minneapolis Institute of Art**. **Jay Milder** experimented early on with spray paint, and created "walls" of paint with his impasto surfaces; in this and his subject matter, he has been connected to graffiti and subway art. His Subway Runner series was originally shown at Martha Jackson Gallery in 1965.

The early work of **Miriam Schapiro** (1923 - 2015) is gestural and painterly, but also rooted in the body. In 1967, Schapiro moved to California to teach at University of California San Diego. Schapiro transformed the colors and modern architecture of Southern California into monumental hard-edge paintings, using computer technology to manipulate and modify the illusionistic shapes. The **Kestner Gessellschaft** in Hanover, Germany, recently paid tribute to the early years of the California Institute of Arts, where Schapiro co-founded the Feminist Art Program, and created, with her students, the legendary installation "Womanhouse." The **Whitney Museum of Art** looks at craft in art, including Schapiro's work in the current exhibition *Making Knowing*. A hard-edge work, "Jigsaw," was included in the 2019-20 exhibition *Spilling Over: Painting Color in the 1960s*, also at the Whitney Museum.

Schapiro was a friend of the painter and graphic designer **Elaine Lustig Cohen** (1927 - 2016), whose legacy was re-examined in a 2018-19 exhibition at the Jewish Museum. Cohen's paintings - geometric abstractions - were influenced by a modernist architectural aesthetic. In the 1970s, the work was characterized by a dramatic simplicity and subtlety, reflecting the lineage of post-painterly abstraction. In 1979, she was the first woman to have a solo exhibition at the Mary Boone Gallery downtown.

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Howard Kanovitz (1929-2009) began using photography as an integral part of his painting process in the early 1960s. He projected photographic images onto his canvases, manipulating the source image, abstracting certain details, and superimposing others. Kanovitz was the first to be called a “Photo Realist,” and was a leader among other practitioners of his time, such as Chuck Close and Malcolm Morley. This position was cemented by his 1966 solo exhibition at the Jewish Museum. Kanovitz’s 1965 painting “New Yorkers I,” in the collection of the **Whitney Museum**, was recently on view.

The work of **Joe Overstreet** (1933-2019) has been re-introduced to many in exhibitions including *Soul of a Nation*, which originated at the **Tate Modern**, London, and *Generations* at the **Baltimore Museum of Art**. It will be featured in *The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse*, an exhibition opening at the **Virginia Museum of Fine Art** in May 2021. Overstreet used abstraction as the site of layered social and political content. From his shaped canvas constructions of the 1960s that reference the civil rights era, Overstreet moved, in the 1970s, to his “Flight Pattern” series: paintings tethered with ropes to the ceiling, wall and floor, which pay tribute to nomadic cultures and structures. Overstreet is recognized as a significant arts community organizer. In 1973, he and his partner Corrine Jennings established **Kenkeleba House** on East 2nd Street, a studio building and gallery that has presented innumerable exhibitions by artists of color.



Howard Kanovitz | Nude Greek, 1965 | acrylic on linen | 62h x 38in

The sculpture of **Reuben Kadish** (1913-1992) was featured in a 1987 exhibition at Kenkeleba Gallery which traveled to the Cornell University art museum. Kadish studied at the Otis Art Institute in 1930, befriending Jackson Pollock and Philip Guston in Los Angeles. He apprenticed with David Alfaro Siqueiros, and traveled with Guston to Morelia, Mexico to paint a 1000 square foot mural. In the 1950s, Kadish transitioned into sculptural work. The terra cotta heads of the 1980s are powerful, haunting works, originally inspired by the 40th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.

Thomas Sills (1914 -2000) was born and raised in Castalia, North Carolina. He began painting in 1952, inspired by the work of his wife Jeanne Reynal, and her collection of abstract art. Sills used rags and cloths to apply paint - as opposed to brushes. This gives his paintings a uniquely gentle, soft aesthetic. Often the compositions form radiating, optical sensations. Sills was the subject of four solo exhibitions at Betty Parsons Gallery from 1955 to 1961. A 1960 painting is part of the permanent collection of the **Museum of Modern Art**. This is the first time his work will be exhibited at the gallery.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Eric Firestone Gallery was established in 2010 at 4 Newtown Lane in East Hampton, New York. In 2015, the gallery opened an additional location in an historic live / work building at 4 Great Jones Street in New York City. The gallery participates in art fairs including Art Basel Miami Beach, The Armory Show, and Frieze. In October 2020, the gallery opened its third location, the ground floor space at 40 Great Jones Street.

‘13 AMERICAN ARTISTS: A CELEBRATION OF HISTORIC WORK’ OPENS APRIL 29th, 2021

40 Great Jones Street | New York, NY | Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday 10am – 6pm

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