

Deborah Remington

February 28 – April 23, 2016

Kimmerich Galerie is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings, drawings, and paintings on paper by American artist, Deborah Remington, made between 1972 and 1982.

This is an opportune moment to consider Remington's idiosyncratic paintings and drawings. As we have all become accustomed to looking at glowing, backlit images on computer screens and smartphones, Remington's immaculately rendered forms, bathed in a completely unnatural light, can now be understood and embraced in new ways by today's viewers.

Although she was born on the East coast, Remington studied with Clyfford Still and Elmer Bischoff at the California School of Fine Arts and is closely associated with San Francisco's Beat generation and the West coast Abstract Expressionists. While her earlier work of the 1950s was tied to more traditional abstract painting, her signature works of the 70s and 80s have never been part of any school or movement and the current climate of stylistic diversity provides a new context in which to view her work.

Remington's paintings present floating shield-like shapes organized around a central axis. These images are at once organic and machine-like. The frontal shapes suggest mirrors, heraldry and armor, imagery that is simultaneously attractive and unsettling, as well as compelling and memorable. Her work overall has roots in the imagery of both Surrealism and of the Machine Age.

These particular works from the late 70s and early 80s reflect how the artist evolved towards her mature style, and yet they are clearly influenced by an earlier period in the artist's career when bilateral symmetry dominated and space was more coherent. Here, Remington has begun to incorporate a more dramatic fracturing of forms. The shield-like shapes of previous paintings and drawings have begun to break up, and fragmented elements float in luminous, indeterminate space.

This exhibition includes a series of Trace Drawings, dating from 1978 and 1979 in which the artist experiments with a variety of compositional motifs. Similar planar elements with their quirky window-like accents are further developed in the elegant working studies and related paintings.

Remington's palette is as unusual as her paradoxical imagery. She tends to limit her colors to black and white, electric red and blue, a deep green (often used as a ground), and small touches of orange. This unexpected color system complements the singularity of her imagery, lending an aura of mystery and reinforcing the dramatic impact of her work.

DEBORAH REMINGTON (b. Haddonfield, NJ, 1930, d. 2010, Moorestown, NJ) received her BFA in 1955 from the San Francisco Art Institute where she studied painting with Clyfford Still and became affiliated with the Bay Area's burgeoning Beat scene. She was one of six painters and poets - and the only woman - who in 1954 founded the now legendary 6 Gallery, where Allen Ginsberg first read his poem, "Howl" in public on October 7, 1955. After graduation, Remington spent two years in Japan studying calligraphy before returning San Francisco, where she had three solo shows at the Dilexi Gallery and one at the San Francisco Museum of Art. In 1965, Remington moved to New York by which time she had gained renown for an aggressive and emblematic visual language influenced by Abstract Expressionism. She made her New York debut in 1967 at the Bykert Gallery, the premier New York gallery for new art at the time. She had three more solo shows there before it closed in 1975. Her work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Art Institute of Chicago, Denver Art Museum, San Antonio Museum of Art and Centre George Pompidou, among others. She taught painting at the Cooper Union School of Art from 1973 to 1997 and at New York University from 1994-1999.

A twenty-year retrospective exhibition (1963-1983) of the artist's work, curated by Paul Schimmel, was held at the Newport Harbor Art Museum, California, in 1983 (now the Orange County Museum of Art), and traveled to the Oakland Museum of Art as well as several other venues. More recently, Remington's work has been featured in several group exhibitions focused on the art of the 1950s and 60s including, *Optical and Visionary Art Since the '60s*, which opened at the San Antonio Museum of Art in 2010 and traveled widely throughout the US. Upcoming exhibitions include: *Women of Abstract Expressionism*, a traveling exhibition organized by the Denver Art Museum with a catalogue published by Yale University Press in 2016. This exhibition will travel to the Whitechapel Gallery in London in 2017. Remington was the recipient of numerous grants and awards in her lifetime including a Guggenheim Fellowship (1984), a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1979), and Tamarind Fellowships (1973, 1983), among others. She was elected to the National Academy of Design in 1999 and received a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant that same year.

This exhibition was organized by Jay Gorney with generous cooperation from the Deborah Remington Charitable Trust for the Visual Arts and its curator, Margaret Mathews-Berenson.