ALMINE RECH

Abstraction as Legacy

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Part document, part subjective storytelling, visual art illustrates and offers nuance to significant moments in U.S. history. From portraits of well-known leaders to history paintings that speak to the sacrifice and strength of the American people, the power of paint to render subjects remains unquestionable.

The act of painting can also make history. Through hard edges and expressive forms, American artists re-imagined painting and used abstraction as a mechanism to consider the human body, natural environs, architecture, emotion, and an economy of line.

This exhibition is not meant to be exhaustive but intended to highlight the breadth of painterly abstraction in the United States. Following the 1950s, it became clear that the art world turned to the U.S. for ingenuity and boundary-breaking abstract art forms. From trends that arose in Havana and made it to the U.S. through exile to experiments developed in New York and Los Angeles, the legacy of American abstraction evolves as rich and varied. The featured artists include Young-Il Ahn, Sam Gilliam, Carmen Herrera, Hans Hofmann, Virginia Jaramillo, Lloyd Kiva New, Willem de Kooning, Joan Mitchell, George Morrison, Noemí Ruiz, Zilia Sánchez, and Vaughn Spann.

On July 4, 2026, the U.S. commemorates and celebrates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This historic milestone offers an opportunity to pause and reflect on this nation's past, honor the contributions of Americans, and to look ahead toward the future we aspire to create for the next generation and beyond. The legacy of painterly abstraction in the U.S. offers a distinctive way to celebrate the creativity and innovation that defines the American spirit.