

# FORCES AT PLAY

NEW YORK CITY - Gallery Molly Krom

October 16 – November 30, 2014

ARTISTS RECEPTION: Sunday, October 19 , 6-9 pm

Gallery Molly Krom is pleased to present *Forces at Play*, a group show that brings together the work of five abstract artists from New York, Washington DC and Iowa. Staged in a small gallery, this show traverses three generations while offering a broad array of ideas related to current practice in abstract art. *Forces at Play* is a title borne out of unexpected everyday materials, vivid colors, and in the interplay of works created by Sheila Crider, Benjamin Gardner, Marthe Keller, Joan Mellon and Leo Rabkin. The forces that are at play are many: forces of friction between the layers and materials in individual works, forces that link these works, the space, the artists, the writer and the curator and, ultimately, the forces that draw in the viewers and compel them to follow these links.

Leo Rabkin, at the age of ninety-five continues to work and to exhibit. His working methods are highly personal: loopy hand stitching, flocking, stamping, scoring, layering and tearing papers and fabric. Rabkin offers an elegant geometric grid only to unravel it with texture and color. The selection of his work in this exhibit, both early and recent, testifies to his electric imagination and the range of his achievements.

Leo Rabkin lives and works in New York City. He is a past President of the historic American Abstract Artists group and a current active member. His most recent exhibition, *Linear*, was at Louise Ross Gallery , New York, November 2013-February 2014. In the summer of 2014 Leo Rabkin was honored by the American Abstract Artist group at the Sideshow Gallery, Brooklyn.

The mature and sophisticated work of Marthe Keller is the complex outcome of years of painting by one unafraid to layer nuanced materials with blended emotions. Strong parallel lines in the paintings selected for this show suggest a grid but they break apart to stand on their own. She asserts that these are "strokes not stripes". Stray threads of canvas run freely along the edge of her work, in which hand craft and playful invention are important elements.

Marthe Keller lives and works in New York City. She is currently an adjunct professor at Hunter College, CUNY and President of BAU Institute, an artist residency operating in Italy and France. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, The British Museum, San Francisco MMA, and The Philadelphia Museum.

Joan Mellon's small radiant paintings are boldly gestural and deep with color. Hues change as though seen in sunlight. Grounded in the traditions of abstraction, particularly abstract expressionism, Mellon has made this inherited language into personal poetry: urgent, intimate, eloquent.

Joan Mellon lives and works in New York. She has exhibited in the United States and internationally and her work is in many private and public collections, including Franklin Furnace Archives at the Museum of Modern Art, Johnson & Johnson, New York Public Library Print Collection and School of Visual Arts.

Sheila Crider is a key exponent of contemporary abstraction and a prominent painter, muralist and teacher in Washington DC, where she lives and works. In her buoyant, lyrical work for this show, Crider moves effortlessly from two to three dimensional highly tactile constructed pieces. Her work announces itself as the overflow of growth and bright sunlight.

Crider's recent projects include public art pieces for the St. Elizabeth's East Redevelopment Project, and the Community of Hope Conway, a Clinic in Washington, D.C. Her recent exhibitions are at Kreeger Museum and the Katzen Gallery (American University) in Washington, UMUC Gallery in Greenbelt. She showed with Gallery Molly Krom in September 2013. Her work was featured in the Spring 2014 issue of Studio Visit Magazine.

Benjamin Gardner is the youngest artist in this group, being exactly 60 year junior to Leo Rabkin. Gardner's insights into the processes of life have prompted him to layer painted sheets of paper onto one another. Windows of color and calligraphy often peek through a razored layer of material, to let lower strata engage with the higher surface.

He lives and works in Des Moines, Iowa, where he is an Associate Professor of Art and Design at Drake University. His recent exhibitions include *The House of the Seven Gables* at University Galleries in Normal, Illinois, *The Soothsayer*, a site specific installation at Box13 Artspace in Houston, Texas, and the *Young Painters Competition* at Miami University of Ohio. DUSK Editions, New York, released a series of his paintings in 2014.

Gallery Molly Krom is grateful to Susan C. Larsen who wrote an essay for and about this exhibit . This press release is largely based on this essay. Susan Larsen is an art historian who specializes in American Modernism and who wrote extensively about the historic American Abstract Artists group. She is a former curator of the Permanent Collection at the Whitney Museum of American Art and a current Consulting Curator for the Clinton Hill/ Allen Tran Foundation of Rancho Mirage, California. She lives and works in Maine.

# GALLERY MOLLY KROM

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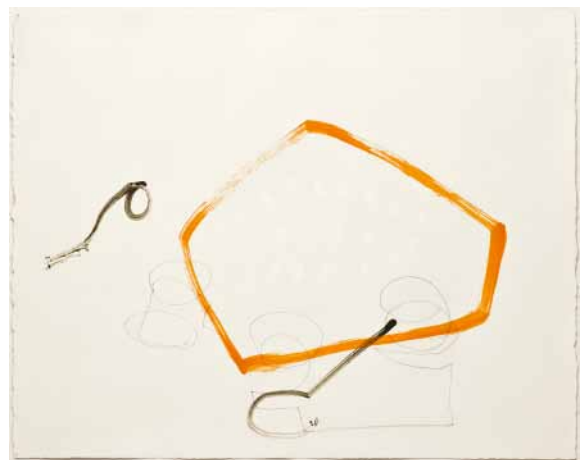
Leo Rabkin - *Tennis*  
watercolor, thread, paper  
22.75 x 21.75in.



Joan Mellon - *Neither Here Nor There*  
oil on canvas  
16 x 16in.



Benjamin Gardner - *Untitled (cold front)*  
Acrylic, collage, spray paint, ink, onion skin on paper  
10 x 10in.



Sheila Crider - *Untitled*  
acrylic, graphite on gessoed watercolor paper  
16 x 20in.



Marthe Keller - *mottu propprior*  
acrylic, PVC, linen, acetate  
53 x 48in.