

# VAN DOREN WAXTER



## Hedda Sterne: Machines 1947-51

March 14, 2016 by Howard Halle



*Monument*, c. 1949-51, Oil on linen, 52 x 30 1/8 inches (132.1 x 76.5 cm)

Sterne, a native of Romania, was one of the few female artists associated with Abstract Expressionism, and her involvement in the movement was significant enough to merit her inclusion in the famous group photo, “The Irascibles,” which appeared in the January 15, 1951 edition of *Life* magazine. She was the only woman pictured among a company of male artists that included Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko and others. Like many of them, she was initially inspired by Surrealism, with her work taking a pronounced abstract tack once she moved from Europe to New York in 1941. The series of paintings here—collectively known as “Machines”—date from the late 1940s and were prompted by her delight with the dynamism of her adopted city. The works undoubtedly reflect that enthusiasm with spirited all-over compositions evoking engine parts, city streets and household appliances.