

VAN DOREN
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HEDDA STERNE

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In 1951, *Life* magazine famously photographed fifteen Ab-Ex painters and dubbed them “The Irascibles.” Only one was a woman, the Romanian-born Sterne. (The artist, who died in 2011 in her centennial year, later said, “In terms of career, it’s probably the worst thing that ever happened to me.”) Among the works here, all of which predate the photograph, are scumbled monotypes of complex industrial contrivances, which recall the influence of Sterne’s teacher, Fernand Léger, and of her fellow-Romanian Victor Brauner. Better still are the paintings: segmented arrangements of gears and grinders amid soft beige and periwinkle, which marry the free-for-all of American abstraction to a more European surreal machinery.

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