

VAN DOREN WAXTER

Zoe Longfield

Paintings and Works on Paper, 1948-1950

March 7 - April 27, 2024



Untitled, C. 1949, Oil on canvas, 30 x 24 inches

Van Doren Waxter is very pleased to announce **Zoe Longfield: Paintings and Works on Paper, 1948-50**, a striking exhibition of sumptuous paintings and works on paper on view at the gallery's 1907 townhouse at 23 East 73rd Street from March 7 - April 27, 2024. This is the gallery's first one-person exhibition of the artist since announcing exclusive representation of the Zoe Longfield Estate and includes material produced by the artist in the late 1940s and early 1950s that has rarely, if ever been shown and/or reproduced.

A daring and inventive first-generation Bay Area Abstract Expressionist—and one of the first women active in the movement—Zoe Longfield (1924–2013) produced a radiant, lyrical oeuvre of abstraction characterized by experimentation and innovation. In a body of work lasting only a decade, Longfield's indelible contributions to 20th century art ranges from her rich, thickly painted pictographic compositions with their totemic symbols and vigorous brushwork in the late 1940s that gave way to softer and luminous abstractions in thin washes of color by 1950.



Untitled, c. 1948, Oil in canvas, 44 x 34 1/8 inches

“Independent,” asserted the late curator, art historian, and Bay Area Abstract Expressionism authority Susan Landauer in the landmark *Women of Abstract Expressionism* (Yale University Press, 2016), which includes a reproduction of a 1948 oil on canvas in which Longfield uses thin, diaphanous washes of greens and blues to create a mesmerizing, biomorphic composition. Art critic R.H. Hagan, writing in 1949, enthused in the *San Francisco Chronicle* that “of all the numerous artists who have taken up the new credo of arbitrary (or spontaneous) expression in unrestrained colors and unrestrained shapes...Longfield impresses me as one of the most successful.”

About the Artist

Zoe Longfield (1924–2013) was an American abstract expressionist painter in the San Francisco Bay Area. She was a participant in the first generation of Bay Area Abstract Expressionism, which occurred in San Francisco in the last half of the 1940s. Zoe Longfield was also one of the earliest women artists working in this movement and is featured, along with her fellow students, in a now well-published photo from the California School of Fine Arts (CSFA) in 1948. During her brief active years, Longfield produced a significant body of paintings, prints, and drawings that showcase both a deft handling of media and a unique visual vocabulary that she employed, in her words, to “solve those inherent problems peculiar to painting.” Like many women artists of her time, she gave up her own creative ambitions when she married in order to support her husband’s career. She never returned to painting after 1951.

Gallery Information

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