

HOLLIS TAGGART

Hollis Taggart to Present the Estates of American Artists Charles Seliger and Ruth Lewin

Interior Worlds: The Art of Charles Seliger and Ruth Lewin
On View February 22 - March 30, 2024

January 25, 2024 – Hollis Taggart is pleased to present *Interior Worlds: The Art of Charles Seliger and Ruth Lewin* two married artists active in the postwar era who both pushed the boundaries of abstraction in very different ways. Ruth Lewin, a member of the Indian Space Painter movement, blended an exploration of the developing Abstract Expressionism movement with inspiration from the natural world and an interest in the iconography of the Northwest Coast Indigenous Peoples. Charles Seliger's complex biomorphic abstractions arose from a deep fascination with nature, biology, and physics, resulting in canvases that have a microscopic and mesmerizing attention to detail. On view from February 22 through March 30, 2024 in Hollis Taggart's recently expanded annex space, *Interior Worlds: The Art of Charles Seliger and Ruth Lewin* will mark the first time the artists' works are displayed together, allowing viewers to witness their artistic dialogue as a married couple whose divergent approaches and techniques demonstrate the diversity of postwar abstraction. The representation and exhibition will be celebrated with an opening reception on Thursday, February 22, from 5-8PM.

Using a wide range of mediums and materials, Ruth Lewin (1924-1975) created striking paintings, drawings, and block prints. Lewin developed an interest in Indigenous art while studying at the Arts Students League in the 1940s, where she was taught by Harry Sternberg and Will Barnet, among others. After exploring and developing a distinct Cubist style, Lewin became a member of the Indian Space painters group, who strived to create a new language of form blending the pictorial iconography of the Northwest Coast Indigenous Peoples with elements of Abstract Expressionism and the European avant-garde. Lewin's kaleidoscopic blend of interests and influences translated into a body of work with a notable breadth of imagery and styles, perhaps most striking in her psychologically complex explorations of the horrors of war through the language of Indian Space, such as in *Untitled [Skeletal Figure with Baby and Children]*, on view in this exhibition. Lewin's work will also be featured in the exhibition *Space Makers: Indigenous Expression and a New American Art* on view at Crystal Bridges from April 13 through September 30, 2024. Her works are in the collections of the National Gallery of Art and Library of Congress, among others.

Charles Seliger (1926-2009) took early abstraction's biomorphism to another level with an almost microscopic investigation of forms and a scientific precision of observation. In 1945, Seliger had a solo show at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery, making him the youngest painter to have ever exhibited in the seminal gallery. (*Embryo in Flight*, on view in the gallery, was among the paintings in Guggenheim's exhibition.) Like Lewin, Seliger incorporated a range of interests into his dynamic oeuvre. Influenced by Surrealist automatism, Seliger experimented with the materials of painting, at times scraping away and repainting with an almost obsessive attention to detail. The remarkable surfaces of Seliger's canvases demonstrate not only a deep fascination with the natural sciences and organic growth, but also a desire to apply the monumental and expansive urges of Abstract Expressionism to concentrated spaces that have a more intimate nature and scale. Despite being in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the Museum of Modern Art, among many others, Seliger's works have not been the focus of a solo show in over a decade.

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About Hollis Taggart

Founded in 1979, Hollis Taggart presents significant works of American art, showcasing the trajectory of American art movements from the Hudson River School to American Modernism and the Post-War and Contemporary eras. Its program is characterized by a deep commitment to scholarship and bringing to the fore the work of under-recognized artists. The gallery has sponsored several catalogue raisonné projects, most recently for the American Surrealist artist Kay Sage, and has been instrumental in advancing knowledge of such artists as Alfred Maurer, Arthur B. Carles, and more recently, Theodoros Stamos, Marjorie Strider, and Michael (Corinne) West. In the summer of 2019, the gallery announced the formal expansion of its primary market business and focus on the presentation of contemporary work. It continues to expand its roster of contemporary artists, focusing on emerging and mid-career talents. With more than 40 years of experience, Hollis Taggart is widely recognized by collectors and curators for its leadership, expertise, and openness, on matters of art history, market trends and opportunities.

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